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FOR EVER:
AN
ESSAY
ON
ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

REV. MARSHALL RANGLES.



FOR EVER:

AN ESSAY ON

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

BY

REV. M. RANGLES.



LONDON:
WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE,
2, CASTLE-ST., CITY-ROAD;
SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-BOW.
1871.

101. f. 335.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICHOLS,
40, MOXTON SQUARE.

PREFACE.

HAD the object of the writer, in producing this treatise, been to make a book, or to entertain the "light reading" portion of the community, some very different theme would have been chosen. However feebly executed, the design has been to lift up a banner for the truth. The author believes there are many who, with himself, prefer, at any cost, to hold the truth in the love of it, assured that it must be best in the long run. In an age when error's assaults are unusually bold and incessant, when nothing is too clearly revealed to escape attack, and when, consequently, many sincere minds are feeling their way to the foundations of their faith, or half bewildered by the conflict of surrounding opinion, it may not be altogether useless if one who has seriously investigated for the satisfaction of his own mind, present the grounds of his belief on a branch of Christian teaching which has come in for its full share of doubt and opposition. Good service has already been rendered by other productions on

the same side of the main question ; and yet there seems to be room and need for some such review as is here attempted, from the standpoint occupied by the writer in common with many others.

There is no pretence of having in these few pages exhausted the discussion of the subject. The matter advanced is intended to *aid* in promoting a clearer understanding and firmer grasp of " the faith once delivered to the saints."

Without tracing all the theories and arguments dealt with to their various origins, which is often more tedious than profitable to the reader, the endeavour has been to sketch a general plan of treatment, and incorporate the arguments on both sides, in the respective places to which they naturally belonged.

In dealing with objections from any quarter, the author has first tried to feel their full force upon his own mind. This, he conceived, was a matter of fairness to the cause for which they were urged, and an advantage to himself in testing their value.

The *age* of an argument has had little or nothing to do with its admission into the body of this essay. Nor was it much regarded whether it was original or borrowed, if it had point and power. Whether new or old, patristic, mediæval, or

modern, descended from antiquity through the crucible of successive controversies, or the product of contemporary thought, or newly born of the author's cogitations, it was accepted according to the measure in which it seemed to possess intrinsic worth.

The author is very conscious that he is sending forth a work in which many defects will appear, which might have been fewer if he could have devoted uninterrupted attention to its preparation. Nevertheless, he cherishes the hope, that, under the blessing of the Father of lights, whose glory is its highest aim, his labour may, at least in some degree, attain its principal object.

Halifax, May, 1871.



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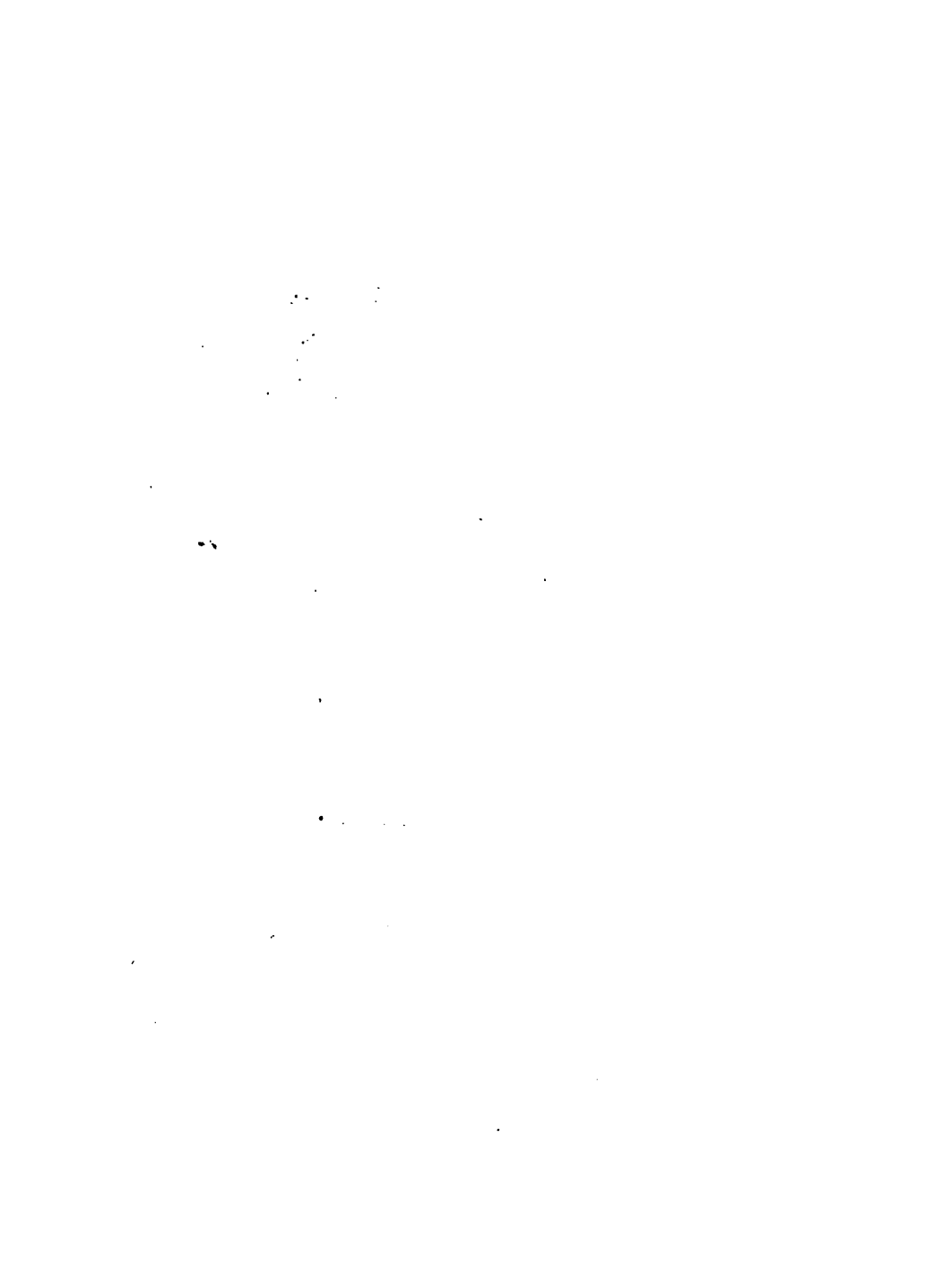
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FOR EVER:

AN ESSAY ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

“ Every truth which is revealed in the Oracles of God is undoubtedly of great importance, yet it may be allowed that some of those which are revealed therein are of greater importance than others, as being more immediately conducive to the grand end of all, the eternal salvation of men.”—JOHN WESLEY.

A DISPOSITION is observable to set down the doctrine of eternal punishment as a mere matter of “opinion,” or speculation, and thus relegate it to the region of unsettled “open questions.” Were its adherents to fall in with this compromise, they might win the compliment of theological amiability; but would certainly concede that the doctrine was unsupported by indubitable evidence, that it had no practical bearing on man’s interests, and that its candid investigation and belief were beyond the range of responsibility. The tendency of such compromise would be to render a theme uninfluential which was intended to stir the depths of feeling and volition. When, to avoid a

disagreeable controversy, or the trouble of research, on a gloomy subject, men yield to regard it as a mere matter of speculative opinion, they virtually give up the doctrine, which, rightly held, is not a speculation, but a belief based on Divine testimony.

In the history of religious doctrines the place of this one is generally on the side of the cardinal Christian verities, and its denial on the side of scepticism, more or less advanced. This fact, on the principle that truth dovetails with truth better than with error, though not of itself sufficient proof that the doctrine holds the high rank of a leading element of the Christian revelation, is yet perfectly consistent with that view.

To have a prominent place in the Word of God is enough to invest the doctrine with grave interest in the eyes of candid inquirers. But when we consider its profound import, if true, it is amazing that any should think of lowering it to the grade of an inoperative opinion. Between a religion setting forth never-ending pain as the effect of refusing it, and one threatening only a limited effect, the difference is incalculable. By the latter hypothesis the whole aspect and value of Christianity are changed. In the one case, the penal consequence falling on the disobedient, and escaped by the obedient is terminable; in the other case interminable. The two admit of no comparison in point of duration. In the one case, the believing are saved from the limited evil which the unbelieving suffer, *i.e.*, believers are saved immediately, and unbelievers after a time. In the other case

salvation means to avoid, and damnation to endure, an unending penalty, *i.e.*, the saved to escape at once and the damned never. Many opponents of the doctrine own its momentousness when they proclaim millions of years in suffering a trifle compared with endless woe.

And as its truth or falsity greatly affects the *interests* of mankind, it correspondingly affects the *motives* to embrace the religion of which it professes to be one of the sanctions. Taking for granted man's regard to consequences, "the terror of the Lord" must appeal with far greater power to his fears when understood to portend punishment without end than when taken to threaten it for a limited period. Is it a question of moment to a citizen, whether a particular crime shall be punished by incarceration for a week, or for life? Much more momentous is it to the responsible creature of God, whether persistent rebellion shall entail a penalty of years, or of ceaseless duration. If eternal punishment be untrue, its preachers are urging men to repentance by a consideration infinitely too strong. They misrepresent the rewards and punishments appointed by their Master, and thereby seriously misrepresent Him. They wield a motive-power which God Himself has not wielded. They attempt to further the Gospel by a huge falsehood, exaggerate the terms on which the Moral Governor will deal with His subjects, and seek to induce holiness by the incentive of a vast bugbear. If, however, the doctrine be a part of God's revealed mind, its antagonists are, wittingly or unwittingly, fighting against

God, misrepresenting His mind and purpose, seriously deceiving His responsible creatures on the matter which concerns them most deeply, and nullifying a powerful motive to "flee from the wrath to come." As far as they are believed they mutilate for the people the grand system of moral government under which man is placed, and mislead as many as follow them, anent the bearings of their present life on their solemn destiny hereafter.

When God unfolds a truth, it is beyond our competence to pronounce it powerless in His wondrous scheme of government. But in this instance, much of its practical weight is apparent. Whatever the nature, or duration of the punishment, its disclosure in the Word is not an abstract or isolated idea, like a single lurid ray, to excite wonder, without shedding light on our path to the heavenly goal. It is the red light to warn us of the danger. It is the correlative to the attractive white light of the Cross. It is a doctrine having *work* to do upon men's hearts, interlacing itself with the most practical exhortations of the Bible, and penetrating the questions most vitally affecting our weal or woe. If then the revelation of future punishment is of vast concern, as a portion of that concrete system of truth which bears so powerfully on human experience and destiny, so is its *duration*. The dread of hell is deepened as much by the duration as by the form and intensity of the suffering. Its length, as well as its nature, is designed to act strongly on men's character and conduct, and as eternal infinitely exceeds limited punishment, so much

more serious is the question of its truth or falsehood. The interests at stake are so much greater than on any other hypothesis as to increase immeasurably the solemnity of the inquiry. We venture to think the *mode* of punishment a question of less moment than its perpetuity, inasmuch as between any diverse forms of suffering the disparity is limited, while between any number of years and eternity, the difference altogether surpasses measurement, comparison, and conception.

We are therefore as unable to make the doctrine of eternal punishment a mere speculation, or uninfluential opinion, as to deal thus with the doctrine of a future state, or of the number for whom Christ died. The awards of civil law are allowed to be of great concern to the population living under it. How much more the awful awards of that law which God has imposed on mankind, and according to which He will reckon with it in the last day.

The importance of the doctrine is not dissipated by admitting that a man may be saved who does not believe it. We grant, its belief is not made a necessary condition of salvation ; and the same might be said of many other weighty doctrines, such as man's universal depravity, the universality of redemption, and the direct witness of the Spirit : although in these and similar cases the Searcher of hearts will take into account the opportunities for acquiring knowledge, the sincerity, diligence, and humility with which it is pursued, and all the elements which render men amenable for their belief or disbelief of Divine teaching. An Englishman may ignore or disbelieve that a

certain breach of law will have a certain length of imprisonment ; yet, behaving loyally, he may never experience the penalty. So, a man may believe in Christ, yet mistakenly doubt or deny eternal punishment, not discovering his error till it be exposed by the light of the future world. Then he may discover how Christ has delivered him, not only from temporary, but everlasting ill, and how needful for unbelievers still in probation to know the duration of the curse to which they tend. This case, however, of saving faith in Christ associated with denial of endless punishment, does not appear to be common. Generally the loosening of faith in the doctrine under notice, is accompanied, or followed, by a similar process on kindred topics, and a descent towards disbelief of the vital truths of the Gospel. Whether it be so or not, the possibility of getting to heaven without acceptance of this particular verity does not destroy to the unsaved the stupendous difference between its being true and false.

While these considerations impress the subject with importance for every age through the course of time, there are others which surround it with special claims to notice in the present. The tendency of much modern thought is to "religion made easy," both in doctrine and practice. There is a strong current of "multitudinism," which would bear away all doctrinal standards, inscribe contradictory religious teaching with the name of Christ, and approve the ecclesiastical amalgamation of spiritual instructors mutually antagonistic. Among conformists and nonconformists,

in political and literary circles, there is a bent towards "free thinking," and a "free handling" of God's Word, accompanied by much trituration and disintegration of creeds. It is easy to perceive, in many quarters, a pre-disposition to the sceptical side of every religious dogma, and too often mixed with a supercilious indiscriminating contempt for all Churches and theologies. Over against this state of mind there is too often an apparent willingness to meet scepticism half way, by casting off as much of Christian doctrine as may be possible without losing all title to the Christian name. A fling at doctrinal teaching, a sneer at creeds, a laudation of non-theological sermons, are become hackneyed methods of catching applause. Probably the indolence which eschews patient inquiry co-operates with incredulity to produce that mental characteristic of the age which craves a "religion of love," or amiable self-complacency *minus* doctrinal truth, the flesh and form *minus* articulated bones, a ship without framework, morality and sentiment without theology. It would be unreasonable to expect this modern ferment against Christian doctrines in general to let the particular one of eternal punishment pass unmolested.

From the time of Origen the subject has been now and again debated; and very likely, from that day to this, a few have been ranged on the negative side. But, within the present generation, the discussion has been revived, and from various quarters the doctrine has been assailed. Besides the attacks of polemics, favourite authors, who were above argument, have

hurled at it occasional darts, whose power to damage arose from the popularity of their pens. Books, pamphlets, and serials have recently multiplied against the doctrine. A few, professing evangelical principles, have published their rejection of it. And here and there the otherwise evangelical pulpit has, more or less distinctly, echoed the disavowal. Although we cannot admit that the mass of "the people hate the doctrine," (which, if it were so, would no more disprove it than would the hatred of devils,) nor that "the spirit of the age cries" against it; yet it may be allowed that the bias of the age for a lax theology has favoured these open assaults and indirect thrusts.

America contains several new sects who deny the doctrine. One of them, called Spiritualists, boasts of three millions of adherents. Many in the old world, including Church-members, have made up their minds to expunge it from their creeds. Many others avoid all mental difficulty by shunning the subject. Others are unsettled and anxious, casting about for further guidance, or groping after the principles and testimonies on which it rests. An agitation is kept up by Destructionists, Universalists, and Infidels, with a view to uproot the idea of endless suffering from the human mind. Representations of it as having lost almost all hold of the faith of Christendom we deem an empty boast that may make some craven Christians half ashamed of their convictions; yea, we are constrained to think many who are claimed as its opponents reflect too little to have any deeply founded faith, either for or against it. Charmed by the novelty,

ingenuity, flattery, or seeming generosity, of certain superficial objections, they flippantly bandy them about, for the sake of the effervescence they produce, or the transient solace they bring to the conscience; but, on near approach to the unseen world, they abandon them as untrustworthy pilots into the port of eternal calm.

Still the number of anxious inquirers, unsettled doubters, passive ignorers, decided disbelievers, and active assailants, is great enough to justify renewed investigation, and an earnest endeavour to arrive at the revealed mind of God.

CHAPTER II.

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE.

"What we know is as nothing to what we know not."—SIR W. HAMILTON.

ALTHOUGH some heathen nations have left traces of their belief in perpetual punishment, there is no evidence of their having reasoned it out from nature, nor of their obtaining it intuitively. Whether, however, the idea was original with them, or they owed it to the possessors of a Divine revelation, their holding it would not be sufficient warranty for our doing the same, just as the belief of a universal restoration and annihilation by other heathens constitutes no claim upon our faith for either idea. The doctrine of eternal punishment is not true because Augustine and the great bulk of Christendom have held it, nor false because Origen and his few disciples have denied it. Its prevalent belief among the vast majority of professing Christians for eighteen centuries may confirm its leading proofs, but alone could not sustain its claim. Neither can it be decisively affirmed or negatived by our present experience; for it concerns a condition of things yet in the future. Present experience may supply a foretaste of the *nature* of the punishment, but cannot certify us of its endless *duration*. All here is brief and precarious, containing no parallel

to *perpetuity* of pain or pleasure. The doctrine of eternal punishment is a truth in the intellect of man ; not yet a *fact* in his experience. The fact is beyond the reach of present observation. It were a marvel if our unaided reason could ascertain the doctrine. That it cannot do so, is exactly accordant with what might have been expected ; yet in no way discordant with the veracity of the doctrine. How far into the question our reason *might* have penetrated, had its powers been unimpaired, and its data inclusive of all the facts of the present state of being, we have no means of knowing. As the case stands, the human mind, left to itself and nature, strain as it may, is utterly unable to solve the problem.*

* It is not here intended to imply that the idea of eternal suffering was inconceivable apart from revelation, but undemonstrable. Nor do we forget its analogy, pointed out by Bishop Butler, to the *finality*, as far as this life is concerned, of the punishments often incurred by wrong doing here. But that and the concurrent opinions of Gentile poets and moralists would not seem sufficient alone to establish the doctrine. After the revelation of the doctrine, such analogy illustrates its reasonableness, and may be regarded as confirmatory. Dr. Parker, ("*Ecce Deus*,") in his desire to find a parallel to everlasting punishment in the experience of the present life, mistakes *finality* for *eternity*, when he calls the life-long ostracism of a vicious man from virtuous society everlasting punishment, as in the case of one who has been imprisoned for dishonesty, and is consequently shunned, and never regains the confidence of his neighbours. Strictly speaking, his punishment by his neighbours cannot last longer than his life and theirs, neither of which is everlasting. That cannot be everlasting which only lasts for a time. The deprivation of social position in the one case, and of the offer of

Let it be well noted that this inability extends to *both sides* of the inquiry. The negative conclusion is as unattainable as the affirmative. It is as impossible for mere reason to pronounce the doctrine false as true. If the facts and reasonings of our present state fail to teach the perpetuity of future punishment they fail equally to teach the contrary. On this matter, nature has no positive conclusive testimony, *pro* or *con*. The just inference is, that all appeals to human predilection and preference,—all references to “the spirit of the age,” and its longing for the doctrine to

heaven in the other case, may be alike *final*. But the finality of the former is no parallel to the positive punishment without end of the latter. By an immoral act a man may lose, and never, in this world, regain the favour of his neighbours, yet in his heart may obtain forgiveness of God, and, in due time, inherit everlasting life. But it would be a malappropriation of words to say his neighbours inflicted upon him everlasting punishment. The supposed analogy was employed in “*Ecce Deus*” to support the scriptural doctrine. But it appears to have contained the germ of Dr. Parker's theory of *terminableness*, now proclaimed in “Old Truths in New Forms.” The sense in which he makes social reprobation everlasting punishment is the same as that by which Destructionists endeavour to explain “eternal judgment” and “everlasting punishment” negatively, as meaning never to regain what is lost, and so compatible with extinction. We are afraid the analogical argument of “*Ecce Deus*” is framed at the expense of truth, and involves a sense of everlasting punishment which may have become its author's stepping-stone down to his peculiar form of Destructionism. The Scriptural doctrine is that of personal existence for ever, under positive suffering; to which we believe no parallel can be found in the temporal experience of society on earth.

be set aside,—all foregone conclusions ere the Word or God is submissively consulted,—are but wanton attempts to break loose from rational investigation, which, while they may obscure, never can destroy the truth. Such a course is the more to be guarded against, because our fallen nature is in the position of culprit, and therefore prone to prefer whatever seems to lighten the doom in prospect.

The fruit of these reflections is, that the doctrine of eternal punishment, if known to us, like those of the Trinity, the resurrection of the dead, and some other great elements of the Christian system, must be matter of *Divine revelation*. It is worse than foolish to decide the question by our social instincts, or our desires. The touchstone is, “What saith the Scripture?” This does not mean that scriptural truth may not be reasoned upon, and be perfectly reasonable, nor that unrevealed knowledge may not be deduced from the revealed. But the question before us is one of those to which no reliable answer can be found, except in revelation.

With those who impugn the Divine authority of the Bible, and reject all supernatural instruction, we cannot here argue; for we have no common ground. Our controversy with them would be shifted to the question of the Bible as the Word of God, which would require a book of itself, and is beyond the scope of this essay. It may, however, be remarked that, by taking that standpoint, they extinguish for themselves all Scriptural light; not only on this one point, but on *all others*. When they have shut out of their minds, if

that be possible, all knowledge of God, man, and eternity, derived from the Scriptures, the scanty twilight left will as little qualify them to say future punishment will be limited, as that it will be for ever. By rejecting the Word they draw the curtain over the world to come, and then, at best, can but guess and grope till flimsy speculation shall be exchanged for irrevocable reality.

Still less can we argue with those who at the outset declare they will not believe the doctrine "on any evidence whatever." If they mean what they say, they avow their readiness to give the lie to God's word, which is as near an approach to blasphemy as we can imagine. If they mean that they are already certified of the contrary view, and that therefore there can be no valid evidence of this, their words are egregiously inapposite, and their position one which these pages are intended to prove untenable.

Others seem to admit the authority of the sacred Oracles, but extrude from them the doctrine in dispute. They allow that phraseology capable of our interpretation is employed; but resolve, on other grounds, to attach a different sense. It is fitting here to ask *when* an apparent doctrine of Scripture may be *rejected as only apparent*? Otherwise we may be in danger of casting away pearls of Divine truth from mere whim, caprice, or indifference. We answer,—

1. When it *contradicts itself*, or comprehends two ideas contradictory of each other. If any part of Scripture were quoted to teach that God was omnipresent, and yet confined to one locality; or had a nature

incapable of thought, and yet was conscious ; or incapable of form, and yet had a shape, we should reply that the Scripture was being misinterpreted ; since, being from an infallible God, it could never teach what in the nature of things was impossible. We are not aware of any alleged violation of this rule in the doctrine of endless punishment.

2. When it *contradicts any clearly ascertained teaching of the same Revelation*. All truths agree with each other, though between supposed truths there may be woful conflict and confusion. No communication from the God of truth can disagree with another from the same source. Where a doctrine is contained in His Word beyond a doubt, all other Bible teaching must harmonize with it. If, for instance, by a collation and comparison of numerous and unmistakable passages, the proper Deity of the Son of God be irrefragably established, others, which speak of Him as doing and suffering what is peculiar to humanity, could never disprove His divinity. We are then justified in rejecting the doctrine of His *mere humanity*, because contradictory to those portions of the Bible which put His proper Deity beyond reasonable doubt. If, again, from the words, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die," any one should maintain that our present life will entail no after consequences, the easy answer would be that other parts of the Word abundantly certify that what we sow here we shall reap hereafter ; therefore, the former inference cannot be true. When each of two contrary propositions claims to have the preponderant Scriptural evidence in its favour, to which

the other should yield, the decision does not depend alone upon the *number* of texts quotable on either side ; but quite as much upon their clearness and force. Fifty equivocal quotations may be lighter in the scale than half a dozen whose testimony is unstrained, direct, and positive.

The bearing of this canon on our main subject of inquiry is important. A multitude of texts might be cited, more or less in support of eternal punishment ; but our chief dependence is on those whose meaning is so clearly in its favour that nothing short of straining, wrenching, or attenuating, can make them teach anything else : while those adduced on the other side, either for universal restoration, or annihilation, are few in number, except when irrelevantly heaped together, and do not contain a single decisive *dictum*, or a passage which may not be fairly explained in unison with our view. If so, the doctrine to be accepted is that of eternal punishment ; and all contrary to it to be rejected.

3. When it is manifestly *at variance with the context* of the Scripture supposed to teach it, *e. g.*, if one should contend from the words, "hear the Church," for the subjection of the civil state to ecclesiastical rule, the context would show the reference was to matters ecclesiastical, not civil ; and therefore the dogma could not be founded on the passage. Observance of this rule, it is presumed, will greatly strengthen the direct Scriptural evidence of the doctrine under debate.

4. When it *contradicts a truth clearly established by the*

constitution and course of nature. The laws of nature, both mental and material, are from that God who speaks in the Word ; and they must agree therewith in the information they supply. Rightly understood the works and Word of God must correspond. Hence if any were weak enough to deny the mortality of Christian people, because Christ says, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die," the error would be refuted, not only by other parts of the Bible, but by the well-ascertained facts and principles of human physiology. Again, when it is contended that Christ's real body and blood may be wholly in twenty, or twenty thousand places at once, because He said of the bread and wine, "This is My body," and "this is My blood," the reply is, that since God has taught us in nature the impossibility of such manifold corporeal presence, His words must mean something else. Much has been done to find some law in natural conscience or sympathy, from which to evoke a contradiction to endless suffering ; but hitherto with no success, as the sequel of this treatise will endeavour to show.

On the other hand, while the breach of such canons as these would negative the claims of any hypothesis to a place in Holy Writ, we must beware of setting up false and arbitrary canons of interpretation. It will be well, in discussing the subject before us, to remember,

1. A professedly Scriptural doctrine is not to be rejected because it *exceeds our comprehension*. For then we should have to renounce the attributes of God and all infinity. The truth of God's ubiquity and absolute.

eternity may be fully ascertained by a finite mind, which can never comprehend either infinite space, or infinite duration. To imply more than our contracted minds can grasp is perfectly consistent with the veracity of a proposition. There may be no contradiction, yet far more involved than the mental vision can embrace. Consequently, it in no way affects the truth of everlasting punishment that our minds are unable to compass its duration. The same is true of eternal life.

2. A doctrine is not to be rejected because the *grounds or reasons of it are unsearchable*. Its utility may be invisible; its why and wherefore equally so. Its causes and effects may defy our penetration, and yet its credibility be irresistible to a candid inquirer. Many are unable to perceive a single reason for the permission of evil, yet stern fact proves it true. Few, if any, can discern the *rationale* of the Trinity in Unity of the Godhead, yet many are constrained to believe it on the testimony of God Himself. The mode of the Spirit's operation in the human heart is too mysterious for the analysis of the recipient mind, which, nevertheless, feels sure of the Spirit's work. Some might not be able to account for the lapse of thousands of years preliminary to "the dispensation of the fulness of times," yet the historic truth of that method of proceeding is in no degree shaken thereby. Similarly, supposing mortal man unable to conceive the *rationale* of an *unceasing* penalty, that would afford no ground for rejecting it in face of positive inspired testimony.

3. Nor may we reject a professed doctrine of Scripture because it is *not taught in the present course of*

nature. For, then revelation could discover nothing new ; but only confirm our natural knowledge. If all in the Bible were to be repudiated which was not also taught in nature, Christianity would be pared down to the few meagre elements of natural religion ; blind to man's origin and moral history, God's threefold personality and character, His Son's mediation, the resurrection of the body, and general judgment of mankind. On these vital themes man's reason questions nature in vain. Profound silence mocks his most eager cries for knowledge. And when nature's God answers by His written Word, it were consummate folly to refuse the response because not made by some other medium. It is the part of sound judgment to hail the supernatural light, even if unaccompanied by a ray of natural. This rule applied to our subject, the conclusion is, that no lack of natural knowledge can invalidate the doctrine under notice, if it be a part of the written revelation. Nay, if true, its deep concern for man creates a high antecedent probability of its being prominent in that only Book which infallibly unfolds the scheme of redemption, with the respective results of acceptance and rejection.

4. Still less have we a right to reject a doctrine because it is *opposed to our own inclinations*. Indeed, to dispute it on that account is a course which none but the reckless would take. And yet, with many antagonists of endless suffering, it is evidently the latent principle of action. Admit the principle, and there is an end to all moral order and government. Deny the principle, and the voluminous appeals of the day

to the feelings of probationary man against the doctrine will seem as appeals from the law to the criminal.

5. Nor must a doctrine be necessarily rejected because it is *opposed to our pre-conceived notions of right and wrong*. For, if each man had, in himself, a perfect standard, or faculty for deciding what was right and true, its dictate should be the same in all men ; whereas it is notoriously diverse on the moral quality of the same course of action. If the hinging of one man's happiness, to a considerable extent, on the character of another, were a *future* instead of a present part of the Divine government, the moral judgment of some men might pronounce it unjust. As it is, we are obliged to believe God is able to vindicate it. One man declares his conscience revolts against eternal punishment, another as solemnly declares his conscience thoroughly approves its justice. Which is the true oracle ? Their diversity proves either may be in error, and that neither has an innate, infallible test of the morality of the view presented.

What then ? Is there no power or faculty in man to distinguish right and wrong ? Yes ; but it is impaired ; and the diverse results in different minds tell how liable it is to stray.

The assertion that human conscience bears witness against the doctrine in question carries an air of superior virtue, and may captivate the unwary and superficial. Let us oppose to it the three following remarks :—

1. What is sometimes *called* conscience may be something else passing under a noble name. It is not

difficult for some men to persuade themselves they are uttering the judicial language of conscience when they are only dealing out the result of fervid desire, or eager speculation, or deductions from unlawful analogies between Divine and human administrations, forgetting how different are their ends, prerogatives, and functions. How otherwise can we account for the strange things sometimes perpetrated under the profession of duty? We presume not to draw the line between the real and the counterfeit *dicta* of conscience; but what has been said may well counsel to caution ere an apparent truth of Scripture and a healthy enlightened conscience be proclaimed mutually antagonistic.

When it is affirmed that the human mind condemns the doctrine by its estimate of the character of God derived from His Word, the question is changed. It is not then, Have we any innate touchstone by which to accept or reject the doctrine? But, Are the revealed perfections of God consistent with it? a question discussed in the body of this essay.

2. The faculty of deciding between right and wrong is at present *defective*. Thinkers are anything but agreed on the nature of conscience. For ourselves, we do not take it to be a distinct faculty, or intuitive gift, confined in its action to moral questions, but the natural judgment, applied to a moral subject, *i. e.*, to the moral behaviour of its possessor. It is rather the faculty for weighing and deciding on the evidence, than a source of knowledge. It is not so much a light in itself as the power to use the light. It does not

make, but *applies*, the moral law. The rectitude of its *dictum* is dependent on the fulness and clearness of its light, and on the exact working of the mental powers. Its best light is the inspired revelation. Even with that light, its operations may fall far short of accuracy; but ignorant of that light, or refusing to use it, the inaccuracy is greater still. Is this the authority to set up in condemnation of what appears firmly seated in the Word of God? The healthy action of a conscience illumined by the Scriptures decides in accordance with them; and therefore, when it seems to arrive at a conclusion adverse thereto, it doubts its own correctness rather than that of the Word, and renews the process in order to detect its own slips and wanderings. It is more inclined to re-adjust itself to the Bible than the Bible to it.

Our definition, however, is not necessary to the fallibility and untrustworthiness of conscience in this case. The same diversity in the conclusions of different minds holds, as a matter of fact, whether it be an intuition, a "moral sense," a "moral instinct," or an exercise of judgment. As bodily perception may be at fault through defect in the eye, or scarcity of light, or both, so may the perception of moral qualities, through defect of mind, or want of knowledge.

8. It may be fairly doubted whether a reliable decision on the justice of eternal punishment is *within the province* of any living man's conscience, *apart from revelation*. If we are right in confining its function to the behaviour of its proprietor, how can it sit in judgment on another? especially, how can it judge the

conduct of the Most High in appointing future retribution? Its office is not to accuse or excuse others, but itself. Granting it the widest scope, there is neither law nor knowledge in man, call it conscience, or any thing else, which can legitimately condemn the appointment of an endless penalty as unjust or immoral.

When a fallen, erring man stands forward to proclaim that, despite all the Bible says, everlasting punishment is impossible, because adverse to his moral sense, it is natural to ask, Is it really "moral?" or immoral? or sentimental? or only animal? How far is your "sense" reliable when it arbitrarily decides in opposition both to the apparent instruction of the Scriptures and the moral judgment of men as pure and wise as yourself? Are you not usurping a jurisdiction to which your moral sense is inadequate? Is it certain there is no flaw in the action of your mind? May not that doctrine which you discard be intended to furnish inspired *data* on which to base a correct judgment? If so, you are simply closing your eyes to the light, and then declaring surrounding objects invisible.

It is to be feared too many owe their scepticism on this subject to poets and novelists. Genius may so enfold error in the charms of fancy, feeling, and diction as to insure its passage with many for truth. The ability of the witness is allowed to stand in the stead of faithfulness; ingenious putting, for evidence; captivating appeals to emotion and imagination, for argumentative appeals to the understanding; and the pleasure of beholding the author's consummate art, or

of finding a favourite idea enstamped with his glittering sanction, is mistaken for rational conviction. It is often said believers derive many of their notions of hell from Dante and Milton. It may now be said some modern impugnors of endless suffering are greatly indebted for their scepticism to a few living poets and fiction writers, all the more influential because wont to laud the sacred Book. But if Jesus and His apostles are to be corrected respecting the future state by our popular novelists and poets, why not carry out the principle, and appeal from the latter to Virgil and Homer? Our imaginative writers are frequently the decorators, not the creators or discoverers, of Bible theology. They have often rendered it signal help by their setting of its gems. But when any of them presume to obscure, or displace it by their own ideas, they overstep their natural boundary, and have no claim to our credence. Of course, they have as free access to the well of Divine knowledge as others, and may enshrine God's truth in their poesy, and they may weave sound argument into their sparkling effusions. Then all honour to their genius and heart. But men of strong sense and principle will not thus receive their snatches of theology when God's Scriptural mark is wanting, and His solemn truth is flouted.

Some there are who seem to accept the Bible *minus* the doctrine under review. Were a man at liberty to first form his religious creed, and then take it to the Bible, displacing any portion of the latter by the former where they disagreed, what part of revelation

might not be denied? What were the Scriptures worth? The discussion of the gravest Scriptural topics were then but a stupendous play at fast and loose. On that principle we make no attempt to argue the question.

Almost every argument must have its postulates, as the ground common to both sides of the controversy. Something must be taken for granted. The more thus assumed the narrower the circle of minds to which reasoning based thereon can have force. But on the other hand, the smaller the circle the nearer the discussion may approach to completeness over that area. Proofs resting on the inspiration of the Bible would be inapplicable to one who disbelieved its inspiration. The debate with him would be a stage further down in the process of investigation; but they would avail with one who admitted the authority of the Word. A special reason for taking the Bible as our foundation is, that the doctrine we contend for is professedly a matter of revelation; and it may be argued more simply and effectively from that starting point. Whatever aid subordinate inquiries may derive from the present course of nature and temporal affairs, the ultimate appeal is to the Word of God. If the doctrine be not there, let it be abandoned; if it be there, it is our plain duty and interest to accept it from the lips of the Supreme, allowing it all due power over our character and conduct.

Our principal postulate is, that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative revelation of truth from God to man. And for such parts of this essay as may

require it, we postulate the fall of man by Adam into guilt and depravity ; the atonement for the sins of all mankind by the death of the Incarnate Son of God ; the agency of the co-equal Spirit to give effect to the provisions of redemption ; and the free agency and responsibility of man, whose personal choice shall determine his endless destiny.

CHAPTER III.

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

"Thus saith the Lord."

IN a court of law, explicit statement is often of less value than inferential evidence. Thus the positive allegations of the real mother before Solomon were unconsciously substantiated by her willingness to lose the child, rather than let it be destroyed, while the pseudo-mother falsified her protestations by acquiescing in the harsh proposal. The truth fixed, and, working in the mind, will often show itself undesignedly on the part of its possessor. Assuming the doctrine of endless punishment to be true, we may expect to find it clearly unveiled in the Word of God, and in various ways presenting itself where it is not the writer's main object to state it. It is too momentous to be left to inference; and yet too thoroughly ingrained in the scheme of revelation, to depend alone upon express declarations. Hence we have proof direct and indirect, express and implied, deliberate assertion, and underlying pre-supposition. The one embodies the doctrine in some single sentence, or passage; the other lays it bare to our view here and there, as inwrought and articulated into the substance of the sacred Oracles. But between the testimony of the Bible and that of a witness in a human court, there is this difference, that,

while the indirect and apparently undesigned evidence of Scripture is not less confirmatory; its direct and explicit teaching is stamped with infallibility, its credibility is not dependent, as in the other case, on incidental corroboration, but stands strong in its own inspiration. The two kinds of proof may sometimes overlap or run into each other; but, to some extent, we propose to distinguish them, introducing the indirect testimony in subsequent chapters, the direct in this.

Matt. xxv. 41-46. In the forefront of such evidence ranks the emphatic description of the closing scene at the general judgment. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." The force of the expression could hardly be increased by any change of form. It is remarkable that when adverse disputants substitute other phrases, while they easily find more striking terms to denote the form or intensity of the suffering, they utterly fail to substitute stronger words for its duration. "Eternal damnation," "endless punishment," "punishment without end," "complete damnation absolutely eternal," "literal eternity of future torments," "intense endless misery," "everlasting duration of punishment," "hopelessly lost," "perfectly irredeemable for ever," "punishment absolutely eternal,"—are among the strongest forms of language which such writers have been able to employ to represent the notion they singled out for attack. "Literal" is but a feeble expletive. The adverb "absolutely," used properly, would apply only to the eternity, past and future, which

belongs to God, and, in that sense, is inappropriate to the subject in hand ; prefixed to "everlasting punishment," it needlessly transmutes a vigorous sentence into a pleonasm. The fact that, for clearness and fulness, our Lord's words, on duration of punishment, have not been surpassed by uninspired writers, points straight to the conclusion that He deliberately intended to communicate the idea of endlessness, and that He said precisely what He intended.

The shifts made to neutralize the manifest meaning of this passage, are so meagre, as to confirm the orthodox interpretation. We are told "eternal" and "eternity" (*αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*) are applied elsewhere to things of limited duration, as to the hills and the land of Canaan. This, however, decides nothing ; for almost every word is used in different senses and degrees. But when the inference is drawn, that, as elsewhere, "eternal" means terminable though long duration, it must have the same meaning here, we protest that it *does not follow*. It were as cogent to argue that because "god" sometimes denotes a finite being, therefore it does so when applied to Jehovah ; or that the "heaven," which Peter says saints are to inherit, means the firmament, because that is meant by the same word when the apostle speaks of "the fowls of heaven ;" or that "life" means brute life in all cases because it has that meaning in *some* cases.

It has been reasonably contended that the duration signified by "eternal" corresponds to the nature of the being to which it is applied. It gives to the hills a very long period, according to their capability ; and

so to the land of promise, the earth, the Aaronic priesthood and ordinances. It ascribes to God duration absolute, without beginning or end. Applied to man, it attributes duration without end. On this principle the everlasting punishment of an endless being implies an endless punishment.

A comparison of the places where the words "eternal" and "eternity" occur suffices to show that a long terminable period is the less frequent, lax, and accommodated import, and unlimited duration their common and literal one.

Few, if any, will dispute the canon that the usual and literal meaning of a word should be taken, unless there be sufficient reason for adopting a loose and figurative one. Now in this case there is not only an absence of such reason, but powerful reasons appear on the other side for adhering to the proper and ordinary meaning of the word.

1. The supreme solemnity of the Saviour's theme would preclude, if other things did not, all tendency to ambiguous and misleading phraseology. Lifting the veil from the final ordeal when the destinies of men shall be pronounced according to character, He might not deem it needful to state all the exact method of proceeding; but on the question of a limited or an unlimited doom, between which there is an inconceivable disparity, He would be least likely to leave any room for doubt. If anywhere we might especially expect Him to reveal the length of future punishment it would seem to be here, near the close of His public ministry, discoursing on the great judgment of man-

kind. And here He *does* gravely and earnestly declare it everlasting.

2. The drift of the address was to persuade men to prepare for the solemn day of reckoning. And to place before them the most powerful motives arising from the awards of a future life accorded with that design. If the punishment be not eternal, He plied His audience with an exaggerated and unwarrantable motive. If it be eternal, the appeal to their fears of endless suffering was as just and true in itself as it was suited to the design of the discourse.

3. The notion of limited punishment is refuted by the juxtaposition of the expression with the promise of "life eternal."* Manifestly, in Christ's view, the righteous and the wicked, being opposite in character, shall inherit opposite states, and being both immortal, those states shall, in both cases, be co-extensive with

* "Some....have ventured first to conjecture and afterwards confidently to teach, that the condemnation of the wicked in the next world will not be final; which, they contend, is inconsistent with the goodness of God; and that all will at length be brought to immortal happiness. Now, whether this their doctrine be true or not, I scruple not to say that it is highly presumptuous in any one to assert it; since it is wholly unwarranted by Scripture; and therefore, even if their opinion be right, they cannot possibly *know* it to be right. The expressions used in speaking of the rewards of the faithful, and of the punishment of the disobedient, are the very same, denoting that they have no end; as, for example, Matt. xxv. 46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment.' Have we any warrant in Scripture for saying that the same word is to be interpreted literally in one part of the sentence, and in the other figuratively?"—WHATELY'S "Sermons on Future State," pp. 216, 217.

their being. "Eternal punishment" and "eternal life" form a complete and striking antithesis, which becomes mutilated and incongruous, when changed into eternal life and temporary punishment. We have then to suppose that Jesus uses the same word, "eternal," in the same sentence, on closely related topics, in two very different senses. If He had intended to teach that the two future states are of incalculably different lengths—one for a time, the other for ever—He could hardly have expressed himself less perspicuously. Whereas, if His purpose was to reveal equality of duration, it is difficult to imagine how words could have been found more clear and forceful than those actually employed. We do not deny that there is a figure of speech called *antanaclasis*, by which a word is turned in the same sentence to another or contrary sense, as, "Let the *dead* bury their *dead*." But that figure is inapplicable here. The *antanaclasis* makes its presence *apparent* by the opposition or distinctness between the two senses of the repeated word. There is a "play upon the word," which makes it difficult or impossible to attach the same sense in both places. The mind perceives at once that some antithesis is intended between the two meanings. But no such features belong to the expression under notice. The antithesis is between the *subjects*, punishment and life, not their duration. It could scarcely have occurred to any reader's mind that such a figure was here employed, had not the necessities of a foregone creed required some method of getting rid of the plain and obvious sense. The mind no sooner lights upon, "Let

the dead bury their dead," than it sees that to explain the word in one sense only is inadmissible. But no such thought arises out of our Lord's repetition of the word "eternal." Moreover, *antanaclasis* is extremely rare, while the repetition of the same word in the same sense is common, *e. g.*, "As in Adam *all* die, so in Christ shall *all* be made alive," "Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse* of the law, being made a *curse* for us," "They that are after the *flesh*," &c.* There is no more reason to call the words under discussion *antanaclasis*, than, "Be ye *holy*, for I am *holy*."

It has been said that, if equal duration for the punishment and the life had been intended, the genius of the Greek language would not have repeated the adjective; but said, "These shall go away into punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." Had Jesus thus expressed Himself, how eagerly would the expositors who now suggest this form of expression have seized upon His words as affirming the perpetuity of life only! Jesus might have had them in view when He so distinctly predicated perpetuity in each case. Whatever opinion may be entertained of the genius of the Greek language, in the Greek of the New Testament we find similar repetitions of the qualifying terms; as when Paul writes, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching *vain*, and your faith is also *vain*;" and "that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*; and that He was buried, and that He

* See Jer. xxxi. 8; Psalm li. 18; Nahum i. 12; Matt. v. 46 and x. 8; John iii. 6 and xiv. 21; Rom. v. 7, 8, 19-21; 1 Cor. xv. 48; 2 Cor. iv. 3 and ix. 6; Rev. xxii. 11.

rose again the third day, *according to the Scriptures.*" Even if it were allowed that "everlasting" did not apply to the punishment and the life equally, the punishment would have the stronger claim to the fuller meaning of the adjective; for, including the forty-first verse, Christ applies it *twice* to the punishment, and only once to the life. The attempt to neutralize the testimony of the passage by *antanaclasis* and the genius of the Greek may serve to illustrate how determined is the will, and yet how deficient the power, of some minds to extrude the teaching of endless suffering from the indubitable words of the Son of God.

The twisting of the word into two meanings is altogether inadmissible. The punishment and the life are both limited, or both perpetual. Say they are both limited, though called eternal, and, in consistency, similar violence would have to be used with the many *other* precious promises of eternal life, thus cramping the hopes of God's people, by stripping their richest pledges of joy in heaven of more than half their value. This attempt to deprive hell of its perpetuity, if successful, would do much to make heaven temporary too; for it were more fair and consistent interpretation to assert the life and punishment to be *both* temporary, than the one temporary and the other eternal. The former opinion few adopt; and those few only escape one difficulty by plunging into others greater: the latter opinion wrenches the word from its obvious function. We are therefore driven back upon the commonly accepted view that Jesus teaches eternal life and eter-

nal punishment with equal appositeness, fulness, and emphasis.

Hard pressed, as it seems, by this equipoise of language on the duration of the two destinies, one Universalist* seeks to evade its deadly blow to his creed by attaching a limited continuance to the life as well as the punishment. He does not deny the promise of life without end; but denies its being taught in the phrase "eternal life." He holds that the word "eternal" "describes, not the quantity, or duration, but the quality, of that of which it is predicated." And he thinks the word, "whether applied to 'life,' 'punishment,' 'redemption,' 'covenant,' 'times,' or even 'God' Himself, is always connected with remedial labour, and with the idea of 'ages' as periods in which God is working to meet, and correct some awful fall." If we rightly gather his meaning, (often difficult,) it implies that the word "eternal" never in Scripture describes duration, but a state; and never applies to the final beatific state of men, but always to one preparatory to it, as a means to an end. But surely duration is intended when the eternal is contrasted with the temporal. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 17-18.)

Reading the text in this author's sense, it would run, "These shall go away into remedial or preparatory punishment; but the righteous into remedial or pre-

* Rev. A. Jukes, "Restitution of all Things," after the example of Whiston.

paratory life," and that too at the close of the general judgment! On the contrary, here, and in many other places, eternal life is held out to the faithful as a *final*, not intermediate, state—as their highest ultimate reward and complete salvation; the *end* of their faith; the harvest reaped after sowing to the Spirit; the supreme object of hope, not a remedial preliminary process.* We accept his tacit admission, that "eternal" bears the same meaning applied to "punishment" as when applied to "life." Then, finding in the latter case it signifies unending perpetuity, we are justified in attaching the same signification in the former.

4. The attempt to explain away the use of "everlasting," by suggesting that it is "a sudden rhetorical expression," is a subterfuge so shallow as to excite wonder how it could be made except in desperation or frenzy. It will not bear a moment's investigation. The sentence under discussion is as devoid of rhetoric as of suddenness. It was used at the close of a long and serious address, every preceding part of which tended to prepare the way for it. It is not only marked by a naked positiveness, but that feature is the more significant, because, in dealing with other questions, such as the *method* of judicial proceeding, figure is brought into play; but coming to the *duration* of punishment, figure is dropped, and plain, direct, categorical statement takes its place. This important

* See Matt. xix. 16-29; John iii. 15, 16; Rom. ii. 7; v. 21; vi. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; Gal. vi. 8; Titus i. 2; Heb. ix. 12-14.

point is overlooked by the writer, who talks of "the highly tropical style of speech employed throughout the discourse."* The allusion to the virgins, the talents, the sheep and goats, the dialogue between Judge and culprits, are "highly tropical." But, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," has neither suddenness, rhetoric, nor trope, about it; but stands out a brief, literal, ungarnished asseveration of weighty truth.

5. We are not aware that Universalism has gained by philological appeals to classic Greek. But to consider whether the word "everlasting" is ever used by heathen writers in a limited sense, or even whether it be so used in some parts of the Bible, is of less consequence to determine our Lord's meaning here than to inquire how *He* elsewhere uses the word; and how it is used on kindred subjects by those who were closely associated with Him. The Gospel brought to light ideas to which the Greeks were strangers, and which their language therefore was not accustomed to express. Hence old words expressive of heathen notions were often appropriated to the grander truths of Christianity in a fuller sense, indicated by the scope, connection, or nature of the subject. The Church, Christ, heaven, hell, immortality, denoted very different ideas in the new revelation from those represented by the same words in heathen Greek. Bishop Pearson remarks:—"The only way to attain unto the knowledge of the true notion of the *Church*, is to search into the New Testament, and from the places there which

* B. W. Alger's "Future Life," pp. 322, 527.

mention it, to conclude what is the nature of it." The same method is suitable to our inquiry into the *eternity* of punishment, as set forth in the New Testament. The result thus arrived at must be more satisfactory than one reached by ransacking heathen authors to find other meanings than that which lies on the face of Scripture. If an author's meaning in a particular place can be at all determined by his use of the same terms elsewhere, the fact that this word (*aiónios*) occurs thirty times in the four Gospels, and in not one of them denotes less than endless duration, is another rivet to clinch the truth of interminable woe. In the rest of the New Testament it is used about forty times, and nearly always to mean everlasting.* And yet to get rid of an

* Archbishop Whately, whose opinion is claimed against the orthodox view, admits that never-ending punishment is a sense which some of the passages of Scripture will certainly bear; and that such would "perhaps be their most obvious and natural meaning, if these expressions were the only ones on the subject that are to be found in Scripture." (Whately's "Sermons on a Future State," p. 232.) "Men speak of this restricted meaning (of everlasting) as if it were quite common in Scripture, whereas it is really rare even in the Old Testament, while in the New Testament it is questionable whether it is found at all." (Dr. Angus, "Christian World," April 1st, 1870.) There is a difference between Dr. Angus and the Rev. Nathan Rouse ("Examination of Annihilationism," etc.) as to the number of instances in which the Greek and Hebrew words are used in Scripture in the sense of unending duration. The difference is partly due to Dr. Angus's attaching the unlimited and Mr. Rouse the limited sense in several passages that have no relation to punishment; and partly, as it seems, to Mr. Rouse's eagerness to ground the doctrine of endless suffering not on the meaning of the terms.

unwelcome truth, the most unusual sense is put upon this sentence of our Lord's, which of all the places where the word occurs will the least bear it. It is difficult to regard such futile endeavours to denude the passage of its proper meaning in any other light than as the attempts of forensic pleading in a weak cause, which, as it must set up some hypothesis against the evidence, sets up the best it can, although it be flimsy and utterly untenable.

6. It is of the same class of men Jesus speaks in the forty-first verse as in the forty-sixth, and the perpetuity of whose doom He expresses by the very same word, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into *everlasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Each text is strong proof in itself; but, taken as part of the same discourse, each strengthens the other. That it was prepared for the devil and his angels, who fell before men, makes it none the less everlasting for guilty men. Indeed, Universalism, from its principles, is as much bound to find a way of escape for fallen angels as for men. Yet how extremely slender is its chance of success in face of this terrible disclosure, from the lips of our Redeemer and Judge, that for both devils and banished men the curse is "*everlasting!*" It is noteworthy that here the kingdom for those on His right is not expressly said to be eternal,

used to describe it, but on the natural immortality of the soul. We think Mr. Rouse has certainly denied the unlimited sense to some places which have a right to it; e. g., Phil. 15, where the reception "*for ever*" is not as a servant, but a brother in Christ, a relationship which Paul could not but hope would never end.

though we well know it is so from other scriptures ; but here, as if He would be more guarded and explicit respecting the perpetuity of hell than of heaven, He distinctly tells us those on His left shall be sentenced to "everlasting fire."

7. It is contended, in order to weaken the passage, that the word translated "punishment" primarily means pruning, and "is always used for a corrective discipline." Its meaning, however, seems to be chastisement, punishment, repression, etc., according to the subject and connection. It is not the word rendered "chastisement" in the twelfth of Hebrews, which denotes training or teaching of children ; nor is it the same as we have translated "punishment" in Heb. x. 29. It is (*κόλασις*) the same as in John's First Epistle is called "torment," which fear produces, and perfect love casts out. Its verb is used by Peter to signify the retributive punishment of the unjust, who are "reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished." So that its scriptural use is quite agreeable to the testimony of lexicographers who place among its definitions, repression, restraint, punishment. The idea of an ameliorative discipline is foreign to our Lord's mode of employing the term. For He puts it forward as a penalty for sin, in contrast to life as a reward for discipleship. Moreover, were the Universalist allowed to translate it "correction," what would he gain, so long as it was everlasting? He would still have to admit its penal character. An eternal penal discipline would be something very different from the future he pictures to himself for the wicked.

The import of this passage has yielded so little to the battery of Universalists, that some of them have resolved to expunge it and its cognates from the Divine Book, rather than submit to its demands on their faith. One of them* asks, "How does any one know that the mind of Jesus *dialectically grasped the metaphorical notion of eternity*, and deliberately intended to express it?" Having shown that Jesus both intended to, and *did* express it, we only make this quotation to point out that in the mind of this opponent the words of Jesus, taken strictly, do teach an unceasing curse. The following quotation from the same author shows the authority of Scripture is less dear to the heart of this class of antagonists than their pre-conceived idea of restoration:—"If the literal eternity of future torment *be* proclaimed in the New-Testament, it is not a part of the revelation contained in that volume; it is not a truth revealed by inspiration." This assertion virtually gives up the attempt to settle the matter by the Word of God; and wears the appearance of an admission that the doctrine of endless punishment, and the full authority of the Bible, must stand or fall together.

In whatever part of the Scriptures such evidence had been found, as is contained in this passage from our Lord, we should not have undervalued it; for no one section of the Bible is the revelation complete, but all the sections taken together. Nevertheless, it is well to note that the strongest proof happens, or rather

* W. R. Alger's "Future Life," p. 527.

is Divinely arranged, to hold a place in the most important and indisputable part of the Word. Had it been in the Apocalypse, we might have been reminded that it appeared in a book of visions. Had it been in the Old Testament, some might have tried to impair its force by referring it to a partially enlightened dispensation. But, in fact, it comes from the lips of the Great Teacher of life and immortality, not incidentally, nor merely in connection with some other minor topic. It stands out a great central thought, in a long serious discourse on the day of doom. The listening mind is borne swiftly from the retribution on Jerusalem, to its antitype, the general judgment of mankind. The momentousness of the interests handled, the grandeur and rousing power of the imagery, the earnest tones of warning, the solemnity deepening as the discourse rolls on, all well become a deliverance which culminates in a clear authoritative prediction of endless life to the saved, and equally endless death to the impenitent. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," was not the language of a wild weird ascetic from the desert, whose lips were unused to strains of peace; but of Jesus, whose words so often distilled pardons on the contrite, whose miracles were brimful of beneficence, and whose death was the most stupendous display of Divine love to mankind. The author was He whose truth and benevolence would not allow guilty men to stand in peril of interminable woe, without plain, earnest, and powerful warning.

Mark ix. 42-50. Much of what has been said *pro* and *con* on the closing part of Matthew xxv.

applies more or less to the class of Scripture proofs of which it is the chief. There will, therefore, be no need for its repetition in connection with the following texts. Correcting the errors of His disciples, Jesus said, "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

That a fearful doom, and not a remedial purgation, was under contemplation, appears from its comparison with "a millstone hanged about the neck, and cast into the sea." After omitting, on the authority of critics, the reiterate clauses, the doom still appears *endless* from the monitory assertion, that as a fire it is "never quenched," and as a worm it "dieth not."

To weaken the Master's words, it has been suggested that though the fire will not be *quenched*, it may go out from want of human fuel. But had He intended this distinction, He would have refrained from describing

the worm as not dying, and would have spoken of it as *not killed*. Had He said, "the fire that never goeth out," the style of gloss we are confronting might have added, "But it may be put out." Not to dwell on the puerility which such exposition seeks to attribute to the discourse of the Great Teacher, it may be remarked that the notion of self-termination of the punishment is excluded by the clause, "Their worm dieth not;" while the notion of forcible termination from without is equally excluded by the clause, "The fire is not quenched."

The strength of the language is not diminished by any allusion to Gehenna, or valley of Hinnom, where decaying animal refuse bred worms, and where fires burned to counteract the nuisance. None but a childish exponent of Scripture would imagine that valley to be all Jesus meant as the alternative of "the kingdom of God," and as the penalty of holding to sin, here presented under the figures of an offending hand and foot and eye. Gehenna, as the image of hell, represents the intensity of hell's misery by the worm and the fire, and the *perpetuity* of that misery is discovered by the *deathlessness* of hell's worm, and the *quenchlessness* of its fire.

Nor is its teaching of endless suffering weakened by tracing the form of expression to Isaiah lxvi. 24, where the prophet seems to have before his imagination a field of battle, covered with heaps of slain, putrefaction, worms, and fire commingling, as long as there are any dead bodies to feed upon. Both the prophet and the Messiah evidently meant to portray the utter over-

throw of the enemies of God, although the latter more distinctly points to the world beyond the grave. If it be pleaded against us that, as a matter of fact, the horrors of the valley of Hinnom, or of the field of slain, were not literally everlasting, the answer is twofold. *Firstly*, the process lasted as long as the nature of the thing would permit, as it will with the souls of the lost, which is for ever. Moreover, the literal eternity of Gehenna was not necessary to enable Christ therewith to illustrate the literal eternity of future suffering. On the point of finality the analogy implied in the allusion is that, as there was no remedy in the valley for the substances cast therein, so neither will there be any for the souls "cast into hell fire." But, *secondly*, besides analogy there is antithesis, in that the worm died and the fire was quenched in one case, and in the other shall always continue.* Between the idea of hell working restoration to heaven, and that of Gehenna consuming refuse, there can be no analogy whatever. Universal restoration supposes hell to be remedial to those who are condemned to it: whereas to those

* Jesus "expressed the place of torment under the image of Gehenna; and the punishment of the wicked, by the worm which there preyed on the carcases, and the fire which consumed the wretched victims; marking, however, in the strongest manner, the difference between Gehenna and the invisible place of torment; namely, that in the former the suffering is transient; the worm itself that preys on the body, dies; and the fire which totally consumes it, is soon extinguished: whereas, in the figurative Gehenna, the instruments of punishment shall be everlasting, and the suffering without end."—LOWTH.

flung into the valley of Hinnom, there was nothing remedial, but everything opposite.

On the theory of *annihilation*, the resemblance should be between the destruction of those cast into Gehenna, and the annihilation of the wicked in hell. But that could not be the design of our Lord's language; for ceaselessness of the worm and fire were to be *dreaded* by the *individual* offender. They were ceaseless to *him*: or why should Christ warn him to avoid them on that account? Whereas, if he were to be put out of existence after a time, the object of dread could not be perpetuity, but only intensity of suffering. The absence of perpetuity would be his only hope. As Jesus puts the case, perpetuity is the most alarming feature. He lays special stress on the *interminability* of the worm and fire as a terrible consequence to be escaped by turning away from sin in the present life. If the annihilationist should suggest that the fire and worm will always operate, not on the same person, but on an endless succession of persons, he will still have to turn round and face many of his own objections to eternal punishment; for there would then be eternal punishment in God's dominion, though not in any one individual.

At verse 49, Jesus adds, "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt hath lost its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." If the "for" be intended to connect the following words with the foregoing, we are not aware of a more

probable interpretation than that which takes the first clause as descriptive of the lost in hell, (of whom He had just spoken,) and the latter of those who in this life are consecrated to God with a very different seasoning. "Every one (in the place referred to) shall be salted with fire." That is, the very fire which punishes him shall be unquenchable; and as salt keeps animal matter from decomposition, the fire shall keep him, asbestos-like, in the same painful state of being. "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt;" *i. e.*, those who will be separated from sin and devoted as a sacrifice to God, must be seasoned with the grace and discipline which will counteract moral putrefaction. Should this not be the soundest of the many interpretations put upon this text, the evidence of ceaseless suffering supplied in the preceding part of the passage remains intact. But if this *be* the meaning of the forty-ninth verse, the evidence going before is heightened and corroborated in a manner that may well terrify him who hopes for a remedial or temporary hell.

Matthew xviii. 8. It is matter of dispute whether Matthew xviii. 8 is an account of the same discourse as is recorded in the ninth of Mark, or of one delivered on a separate occasion. Adopt either view, and the proof is strong in support of the doctrine we maintain. "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire,"—another unmistakable and solemn declaration from the highest authority. And from its striking similarity in occa-

sion, scope, and language, to that recorded by Mark, we are justified in accepting "the fire that never shall be quenched" as synonymous with "everlasting fire;" thus confirming the unlimited meaning of "for ever" and "eternal" when applied to the state of the lost.

Matthew iii. 12. John the Baptist, foretelling the judicial action of His Lord, indicates the final treatment of the wicked by the very same phrase as was subsequently employed for the same purpose by the Lamb of God:—"Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Between the burning of the chaff and the burning of the wicked we have both similitude and contrast—similitude as far as the two subjects are capable of it; contrast where they are incapable: both are burned; but the process with one is, from its nature, *brief*, though severe; with the other, according to its nature, *ceaseless*. Hence, while the literal fire of the wicker soon does its work and ceases, that threatened against the enemies of Christ ceases not, because "unquenchable."

Jude 6, 7, 13. The brief Epistle of Jude finds space for this doctrine, so prominent in the sermons of his Master. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the

vengeance of eternal fire." There is nothing in the process of judgment which implies that the bonds will then be removed. Indeed, if there were, "everlasting chains" would be a misnomer. Judgment, alas for the guilty! will only rivet, not break, the bonds. This passage certifies the unlimited continuance of the penalty incurred by fallen angels; and by parity of reasoning augments the probability of the same dire future for lost men. The chains, or bonds, are "*everlasting*," and therefore will hold them unto the judgment, and ever after.

The example of Sodom and Gomorrha "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," cannot be explained away as only temporal. For the vengeance must really have fallen, not on the unintelligent material nor on the civil organization of the cities; but on the responsible *people* who inhabited them. Whatever curse happened to the place, or nationality of the place, its weight as a punishment must have fallen ultimately on sentient beings, who were capable of feeling it. To say the vengeance was endured by the cities as such rather than the people in them, would require that the sins of fornication and going after strange flesh were not the sins of the individuals, but of the cities. The resemblance to the case of the fallen angels, implied by "even as," shows that Jude referred to a "suffering" long after the destruction of the cities, which is confirmed by the commination upon the city rejecting the Gospel, "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city." There is evidently a

judgment yet hanging over those cities of the plain, or more literally their inhabitants, which is here called "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." The fire which consumed Sodom and Gomorrha was not eternal, nor does it appear to have been of more than brief duration, and therefore the Apostle must refer to some other fire, of which that was only a transient type, and whose inextinguishable retributive flame corresponds to the eternal unquenchable fire foretold in the Gospels. Jude qualifies life in the twenty-first verse by the same term as fire in the seventh. It would be a reckless disregard of consistency to make him mean limited duration in the one case, and unlimited in the other. As the one is allowed to signify endless life, we naturally take the other to signify endless fire.

Not content with this, he goes on in the thirteenth verse to re-affirm the same woe upon the spirits whom he likens to "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." Jude seems as much to prefer the words "eternal" and "for ever" in connection with future punishment, as some modern teachers prefer to omit or explain them away. Considering the subject, scope, and brevity of the Epistle, the threefold mention of the doctrine of eternal punishment compels us either to accept that doctrine, or reject both it and the Epistle. As we cannot reasonably extrude the Epistle, our only rational course is to yield assent to its teaching. From a rationalistic stand-point, this passage is allowed to embody our view. Mr. Alger, an eager

opponent, says, "He (Jude) probably expected that, when all free contingencies were past, and Christ had pronounced sentence, the condemned would be doomed eternally into the black abyss, and the accepted would rise into the immortal glory of heaven."* It is plain rationalism finds it easier to oust the inspiration of the Epistle from the written revelation than the doctrine of everlasting punishment from the Epistle. We deem it more rational to retain both.

2 Peter ii. 12-17. Kindred to Jude's words are those of Peter, where he depicts the character and destiny of a class of men who "shall utterly perish:" "to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever." This passage, the above rationalistic universalist writer admits, is a clear intimation that "the wicked were to be remanded after judgment, and eternally imprisoned," and his only way of evading the claim of that truth on his credence is to cast the Epistle overboard. A much more cogent objection to this proof-text is the doubtfulness of the reading "for ever." When, however, scepticism has taken all the benefit of this doubt, (which is more than its strict right,) the perpetuity of suffering remains firmly rooted in a variety of express testimonies, of whose Divine authority there can be no reasonable question, and whose evidence requires that the utter perdition and the reserved mist of darkness be understood as eternal.

2 Thess. i. 9. Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, foretelling the judgment of the world

* "Future Life," p. 246.

by Christ, assures us part of His work will be to take "righteous" "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Observe it is not mere correction, but *punishment* (*δικην τίσουσιν*, "shall pay the penalty"). It is punishment meted out by the Lord Jesus, as *righteous Judge* in the great day. It is punishment in the form of "*destruction*;" (*ῥαβδος*, "ruin," as in 1 Thess. v. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 9;) not in the sense of annihilation; for that negative doom, as we hope to show, is not the New Testament notion. This destruction is the positive *contrast* to the "doom" of the "saints." And further, it is "*everlasting*."

Heb. vi. 2. "Eternal judgment" is put forward by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews as one of the fundamentals of Christianity. The *process* of judgment cannot be supposed to last for ever (though even that would involve endless suffering). If we are to attach any meaning at all to the attribute of eternity here given to judgment, it must be associated not with the formation or utterance of the judicial sentence, but with its endurance; and unless we reduce this "principle of the doctrine of Christ" to an odd, unscriptural half-truth, by applying it to the righteous *only*, we are shut up to conclude that the unjust will receive a sentence whose enforcement will continue for ever.

Rev. xiv. 11. In picturing the fate of worshippers of the beast, John tells us "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever* (*εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνων*); and they have no rest *day nor night*." Here the expression

of eternity is double, "for ever and ever," and is confirmed by that of "day nor night," which is a Scriptural way of denoting incessant duration. Equally expressive is the description of the lot of the great deceiver, (Rev. xx. 10,) who "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever;" and of the great whore. (xix. 8.) Here duration of punishment is denoted by the phrase which applies to the reign of saints, (xxii. 5,) and so often to the duration of Divine perfections.

Dan. xii. 2. In the twelfth of the Prophet Daniel we have the same antithesis as in the New Testament, where the ultimate states of the righteous and the wicked are placed in marked opposition to each other; and yet while the two *states* are in contrast, the same duration belongs to both, and is expressed by the same word, "everlasting," עולם (corresponding to *aiónios*). "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Has honest criticism any choice, except to admit the contempt is as lasting as the life? This prophecy was but very inadequately fulfilled by the restoration of the Jews from Babylonian captivity. It foretells awards far exceeding anything in the past or prospective history of that people within the course of time. In some respects it remarkably resembles the prophecy of our Lord, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." That Daniel, as well as Christ, points to final rewards and punish-

ments is further probable from his immediately adding, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever;" recalling again the words of Christ, that, when offenders are cast into a furnace of fire, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

When Isaiah makes alarmed sinners and hypocrites cry, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" an allusion to the threatenings of national foes does not preclude allusion to a deeper and more distant calamity in the world to come. None of the prophets more than Isaiah made national and temporal affairs a mirror by which to reflect the mind of God on affairs spiritual and eternal. God's favour to the children of His spiritual kingdom, and His treatment of the children of the devil, are often foreshadowed in blessings upon His ancient people, and curses upon contemporary sinners. The proximate typified the ultimate; the temporal, the eternal; the smaller, the greater.* Bearing this in mind, there is nothing far-fetched in supposing the terror of the "everlasting burnings" to look through the hostility of the Assyrians to "the fire which never shall be quenched." This text is not cited as an independent proof; but, remembering that many of the prophecies had double references, it would be a bold thing to deny all

* "That same characteristic of prophecy, the larger distance and the nearer earnest, occurs too in our Lord's prophecies."—Dr. Pusey on the Book of Daniel.

reference here to that future effect of sin which the New Testament makes so prominent. The Old Testament often adumbrated thoughts on which the New pours fuller light. Truths blended in the one with type and shadow, draped in Hebrew poetry, or veiled in secular allusions, in the other are more sharply defined and conspicuous. This holds especially (with the exception of a few remarkably clear Old Testament passages) of the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment, the final states of the saved and the lost, and the future state generally. Yet through the long vista glimpses of these subjects are sufficiently descried, to assure us the patriarchs were not strangers to them. Thus the remediless fate of the wicked, rung on our ear in the words of our Lord, comes with a similar though less articulate sound from the prophets, in such sentences as, "He, that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth;" "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins;" "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me;" Sinners "have their portion in this life;" "Then understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh: so, O Lord, when Thou awakest Thou shalt despise their

image;" (what is this but the "everlasting contempt" spoken of by Daniel?) "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup."

John iii. 36. Returning to the Baptist, we have the final destinies of believers and disbelievers set against each other in striking contrast: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Everlasting life," and "shall not see life," refer evidently to *future* states, as determined by believing and disbelieving respectively. The determining period is the time over which the opportunity of believing extends, namely, the present life; as in the great commission, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." Hence the Baptist's closing sentence cannot be paraphrased, "shall not see life *until* he believe,"—as if the privilege would be offered persistently until accepted in time or eternity. "Shall not see life" describes a final consequence of disbelief, as "eternal life" describes a final consequence of belief—the penalty and the reward being both subsequent to the season of believing.

"The wrath of God abideth on him" would be a strong form of expression if alone; much stronger is it when preceded by "shall not see life." But bearing in mind that the two phrases are the correlatives of "everlasting life" in the destinies of mankind, we may conclude confidently that not to see life and to

abide under the wrath of God are tantamount to wrath everlasting.

Luke xvi. 26. It often happens that subordinate parts of a parable are introduced to fill up the scene, without having any particular truth to teach. But to that category the *impassable gulf* cannot belong. It is a salient essential part of the account of Dives and Lazarus; and, with great dramatic force, reveals the changelessness of the fates of both lost and saved. After death it is as impossible to rise from hell to heaven (here represented by the Jewish name "Abraham's bosom") as to fall from heaven to hell. "They which would pass from us to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." So far from encouraging the lost man to hope for deliverance by any means, Abraham leaves him hopeless: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented:" corresponding to our Lord's warning to those who have riches *minus* religion, "Ye have received your consolation." Remembering that the design of Christ was to set forth future rewards and punishments; that the condemned is refused the faintest gleam of hope; that the light of inspired truth, and the opportunities of the present life are deemed sufficient probation for both the good and the evil; we are compelled to believe that any hypothesis short of eternal punishment would reduce a vivid and instructive picture of the future world to inane feebleness or bewildering jargon.

Matt. xii. 25-32. Mark iii. 29. Very solemn are

the words of Jesus as recorded by Matthew and Mark: "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." On another occasion, as recorded by Luke, (xii. 10,) He said, "Unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."

Even were we to adopt the notion that "this world," and that "to come," meant the Jewish and Christian dispensations, it would still appear that Christ never intended to favour the idea of forgiveness after death; for He affords no hint of the pardonableness of this sin at *any time*: which were strange if a pardon were in reserve. Expressions more or less similar to "this world," as reaching to the end of time, and "the world to come," as the eternal state, are not infrequent. Christ is exalted above every name, "not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;" the Greek words being the same. The same term (*μελλον*) is applied to the future state in the phrases, "wrath to come;" "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come;" "an high priest of good things to come;" "nor things present, nor things to come;" "a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." With another word (from *ερχομαι*) to denote the future, we have "manifold more in the present time,

and in the world to come life everlasting." We have also other expressions distinguishing the temporal from the eternal state as this world and that world—the latter, by ellipsis, omitted sometimes, but understood.* So that, notwithstanding the Jewish use of the phrase, "world to come," for the Messianic period, and the two instances of that use, as some commentators think, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we think the *usus loquendi* is not more, if so much, in favour of taking our Lord's expression for the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as of taking it for the present temporal and the future eternal states. But to insist on this is not essential to the proof derivable from this passage. The equivalent to "shall not be forgiven," reads, in Mark, "is in danger of eternal damnation," or, as better accords with the context, and as the same word is rendered in the phrase, "*subject to bondage*," (Heb. ii. 15,) "*is subject to eternal damnation*." But whether the term (*ἐνός*) mean danger of, or subject to, there is no escaping from the fact, that in our Lord's mind "eternal damnation" was a future *possibility* and a *probability*. Explaining one evangelist by the other, it is certain the commination in Mark refers to the future state; and therefore Matthew, as he speaks of the same thing, must mean an irremissibleness extending beyond the Christian dispensation into that eternal future. Moreover, Mark's account, "hath never forgiveness," (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*), forbids our confining the unpardonableness to the

* See Luke xvi. 8, and xx. 34, 35; Titus ii. 12; Matt. xiii. 22, 39, 40, 49, and xxiv. 3, and xxviii. 20.

present life. Taking the two worlds to mean this life and eternity, there is nothing in the expression to imply that *other sins* are forgiven after death. The language does not contradict such an opinion; but neither does it teach or imply it. Nor is it elsewhere taught in the Bible. To argue that as *this sin* cannot be forgiven in the world to come, therefore "some other sins, not here forgiven, may be forgiven in the coming age," is like the polygamist's argument, that as a bishop "must be the husband of one wife," another Christian may therefore be the husband of more than one: which would be paralleled by the inference that because he must be "sober," others might be intemperate. To grant, however, such an idea as pardon of other sins after death, would but little answer the Universalist's purpose, inasmuch as it would still be implied that *this sin* would *never* be pardoned. The irremissibility of any sin involves endlessness of misery. Guilt and happiness cannot co-exist in the same person. The curse of sin can never be removed until sin be forgiven.

Matthew xxvi. 24; Mark xiv. 21. The doctrine of eternal punishment explains satisfactorily the awful pronouncement on the traitor, Judas. "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." Against universal restoration it is conclusive. No limited punishment, though stretching through millions of cycles, could be so great an evil as eternal life would be a good. And hence, if Judas was after any length of suffering to be restored to endless glory, the decision of Christ was erroneous, when He declared non-exist-

ence a boon compared with the fate of the traitor. One Universalist,* in his effort to neutralize this passage, sets up a fanciful analogy between the "old man" and the new man, as represented by Judas and Christ, which has not a shadow of proof in the Gospel; nor would it help his case if it had. His paraphrase shows how a mind at war with the plain sense of Scripture will welcome the merest semblance of defence, or attempt escape by the smallest loophole. It reads, "Good had it been for this man if he had not been born; but better is it that he has been born, that God might bring in better things;" that is, the *good* was not to have been born; the *better* was to have been born. Then what was the *ill*, in *opposition* to the good? According to this paraphrase, none is conceivable; and yet Christ is uttering a most dreadful "woe." This paraphrase says the actual being of Judas was "better" than non-existence; while Christ says his actual being was one of woe, and non-existence a boon compared with it. According to this paraphrase, Christ should have said, "Woe unto that man" as it is; but worse had it been "if he had not been born;" which is evidently the exact contrary of what He intended to say, and did say.

The case of Judas is admitted by Universalism to seem as "dark as night." And yet it is suggested that some way of redemption may be found for Judas, as there was for Adam. To this we reply, *firstly*, that a promise and provision were made for Adam, and probably he knew much more about it than is

* Rev. A. Jukes, "Restitution," p. 125.

handed down from that day to us. And, *secondly*, to reason thus on the case of Judas where the Judge has expressly closed the door of hope, would, if admissible, render *all* future punishment uncertain, despite the most emphatic pronouncements of almighty God.

Much needless labour is bestowed in proving what is readily granted; namely, that "for ever," (*αἰών*, frequently *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*), which often occurs in the class of Scriptures under notice, does not in *every* instance throughout the New Testament signify endless duration. Our denial is of the inference, or insinuation, that therefore it does not mean endlessness when applied to the future state of the lost. In some cases it denotes the present earthly course or state of things; and again the present sinful state, as when we read of "the god of this world," this "evil world," "this world," "the children of this world," and conformity "to this world." It also denotes dispensations, or periods in the administration of Divine government over men during the course of time. But no reason is thus afforded for attaching a limited duration in the class of texts we are citing in connection with our subject. When the kingdom, power, glory, righteousness, blessedness, and living existence of God are repeatedly said to be "for ever;" when Christ is said to be a priest "for ever" after the order of Melchizedec, to have "an unchangeable priesthood," "because He continueth for ever," to be "alive for evermore," and to be "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" when the Holy

Spirit is promised to abide with the Church "for ever;" when the followers of Christ are told they "shall never thirst," "shall live for ever," "shall never see death," "shall never perish," "shall never die," shall abide "for ever," and "shall reign for ever and ever; when the fig-tree is cursed with barrenness "henceforward for ever;" * when it is predicted the Word of the Lord shall abide "for ever," the very same word is employed to express perpetuity as when we read of "the blackness of darkness for ever," of "the smoke of their torment" which "ascendeth up for ever and ever," and of the blasphemy which "hath never forgiveness." The word is as capable of bearing the idea of perpetuity in the case of the lost as in the case of the saved, or of Christ, or of God, or of any subject to which it is applied: and remembering how frequently it is used in that sense,† the rational presumption is, that what it so frequently imports elsewhere on corresponding subjects, it probably imports here in relation to the persistently rebellious.

* The curse was merely *negative*, and therefore might be predicated of a tree which, *as a tree*, would soon come to negation of existence. The everlasting curse threatened against the wicked is *positive*, and therefore cannot be predicated of the wicked, if he were, after a time, to arrive at a negation of being.

† See Matt. xxi. 19; and xi. 14; Luke i. 33; John iv. 14; vi. 51-58; viii. 51, 52; x. 28; xi. 26; and xiv. 16; Rom. i. 25; ix. 5; xi. 36; and xvi. 27; 2 Cor. ix. 9, and xi. 31; Gal. i. 5; Phil. iv. 20; 1 Tim. i. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Heb. vi. 20; vii. 24; and xiii. 8-21; 1 Peter i. 23-25; iv. 11; and v. 11; 2 Peter iii. 18; 1 John ii. 17; 2 John 2; Rev. i. 6-18; iv. 9, 10; v. 13, 14; vii. 12; x. 6; xi. 15; xv. 7; and xxii. 5.

And that probability is confirmed by inspection of the several places.

We are aware of an attempt to undermine this conclusion by explaining the word in these passages as meaning "age" or "age of ages," and consistently limiting it in the same way when applied to God, and the life of the saved. But after such a process of curtailment, how clipped and shrunken are some of the finest promises to the saints, and ascriptions of glory to God! The many perfections attributed to God "for ever" are then ascribed only for limited ages; "God blessed for ever" means blessed for a time; "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness," means that it lasts for a while; "His mercy endureth for ever," means, endureth through certain terminable periods; and the promise of life "for ever" to believers amounts to a pledge of life for a long while. It is hard to suppose sincere and intelligent men could ever take this position, except to escape the force of those Scriptures which so plainly assert the doctrine which they deny. But the remedy is no better than the disease. The future state of the disobedient is frequently couched in one form or other of the word ἀπόλλυμι, variously rendered in the New Testament *destruction*, *perdition*, *damnation*,—to *perish*, to be *killed*, to be *lost*; e. g., "rather fear Him which is able to *destroy* both soul and body in hell;" (the corresponding expression in Luke is "cast into hell;") "Art Thou (Jesus) come to *destroy* us?" (evil spirits); "Broad is the way that leadeth to *destruction*;" "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and *lose* himself?" "shall

never *perish*;" "that whosoever believeth in Him should not *perish*, but have eternal life;" "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise *perish*;" "the son of *perdition*;" "foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and *perdition*;" "swift *destruction*;" "their *damnation* slumbereth not;" "wrest unto their own *destruction*;" "not willing that any should *perish*;" "*perish* without law;" "fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*;" "it is hid to them that are *lost*;" "*perdition* of ungodly men;" "token of *perdition*;" "draw back unto *perdition*;" "go into *perdition*."

An examination of this class of Scriptures supplies the following conclusions:—(1.) The state of the lost referred to is one of *real existence*; for, (2.) It is a state of penal suffering "in hell." It is a state alleged to be, in the case of the son of perdition, worse than if he had never existed, which could not be true if perdition meant annihilation, or if he was, after a time, to be restored to endless bliss. (3.) It is final and eternal; the opposite to "everlasting life." Sometimes the duration, as well as the nature of the doom of both the righteous and the wicked, is formally stated in juxtaposition (as in Matt. xxv. 46); and sometimes the duration is only expressed relative to one of the two classes (as John iii. 15 states the length of the life and not of the perdition; and as Matt. xxv. 34-41 states the everlastingness of the "fire," but not of the kingdom of the blessed). But in the latter case the equal duration of the punishment and the reward is ascertained by comparison of one text with another, and is confirmed by the evident contradistinction of

state without any contradistinction of duration. Thus, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life," affirms the perpetuity of the reward, but not of the punishment, while "Inherit the kingdom," and "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," affirm the perpetuity of the punishment, but not of the reward. Take the two together, and they teach that the reward and punishment in both passages is eternal. If these several portions of the sacred oracles speak of the same future penalty, what some of them declare to be eternal must be taken as so intended by them all, otherwise there is no such thing as harmony of revealed truth.

If to perish is the farthest extreme from eternal life, with which it is placed in antithesis, neither annihilation nor restoration, though different from it, is so truly the antipodes of eternal blessedness as is eternal misery. The translation, "They shall never perish," (John x. 28,) gives the true sense; but the more literal rendering, "shall not perish unto eternity" (*οὐ μὴ ἀπολῶνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*) more plainly suggests that but for Christ they might have perished to eternity.

Matt. v. 26. Jesus was wont to embody instruction on deep spiritual matters in secular allusion and phraseology, of which His solemn warning against imprisonment appears to be an instance: "Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." A reference merely to human tribunals and penalties would seem to fall far short of the earnest drift of Jesus.

And if He refers to the Divine tribunal, the only plausible analogy to detention in prison until payment of the uttermost farthing, is detention in the place of punishment until all is rendered to God which is due. But as one thus condemned has impoverished himself beyond the power of making restitution, his imprisonment must be endless.

There is a large class of passages in the Book of God which, though they do not themselves teach the doctrine under discussion, yet are consistent with it, and derive from it a terrible force ; such, for example, as threaten the wrath and vengeance of almighty God, the damnation of hell, swift destruction, and a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Read the warnings of perdition in the lurid light of this doctrine, and they thereby acquire a power and pungency that may well incite every unforgiven man to flee with all his might from the wrath to come.

The texts already quoted are so contrary to Restorationism and Annihilationism as to leave them no refuge short of out-and-out infidelity. We need not wonder that their advocates generally prefer other battle ground than Scripture, where the testimony is so clear against them, that they are often driven to choose between accepting the doctrine of eternal punishment, and rejecting the authority of the Book in which it is so deeply fixed. It was placed there by the hand which placed the spots in the sun ; and man has no authority to remove it. For ourselves, be the consequences what they may, as we hold to the

Word of God rather than the conflicting opinions and depraved wishes of fallible men, we have no alternative but to receive the doctrine, knowing that there can be nothing in it contrary to the ineffable perfections of Him who propounds it, and who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUBJECT VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S CHARACTER.

"The perfection which God is giveth perfection to that He doeth."—HOOKER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the confusion and self-deception often apparent in men's reasonings on the character of God, resulting very much from confused notions of the mutual relations of natural and written revelation, there are certain great outlines of God's character, on which most men possessing both revelations profess to agree. Whatever names are given to them collectively or individually, there are certain qualities, properties, perfections, glories, or attributes, essential to His being, harmonious with each other, and according to which He governs the universe. It will suffice for our purpose to mention His self-existence, absolute supremacy, eternity, ubiquity, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, goodness, wisdom, faithfulness, truthfulness, and unchangeableness ; although some of these may in strictness be but modifications of others. We propose to inquire whether or not the doctrine of eternal punishment be consistent with, or required by, any of these necessary perfections ; and especially those generally regarded as moral. Distinguishing between names and things, it is obvious that

the issue does not turn upon these, or any, particular denominations of His attributes. Call them by any other names, or by no names at all, yet their reality remains just the same, and their bearing will be just the same on the ways of God to man.

I. *Justice.* It must be allowed that there is a property in God which tends to render and claim what is due as between one moral being and another, a property directly antagonistic to all moral wrong, and which associates sin with ill desert. And this we are accustomed to call *justice*, holiness, or righteousness. It is *there* whatever we choose to call it. To divest God of it would be to take away the foundation of His moral dominion, to destroy the inherent difference between right and wrong, to contradict the voice of conscience which naturally connects sin with punishment, to belie the facts of His providence which abound with traces of retribution, and to contradict still more openly the plainest disclosures of His word, that "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." Nay, it would imply that God lacked a virtue which, in some degree at least, His creatures possess.

Vain is the effort to obviate the claims and effects of Divine justice by explaining it away as a mere phase or modification of goodness. For that could only be done by giving to goodness a wider definition than its radical notion requires, so as to cover all that is meant by justice. But to alter the verbal definition of a thing does not alter the thing itself; and hence that course would leave justice an essential element in

the government of God. Some orthodox exponents of "God is love," have unintentionally helped to confound goodness with justice, by mistaking John's words for a metaphysical definition of the Divine essence, as if love were the inmost nature of God, in which all the attributes inhered. But how could power or omnipresence be an essential attribute of love? If the categorical form, "God is love," made it a definition of His essence, the same would hold in "God is light," which is an ascription of supreme wisdom, as the other is of supreme goodness. To our apprehension the best classification is that which defines God's holiness, in its broadest sense, as the entire assemblage of all possible moral perfections, and goodness and justice as two of those perfections, distinct yet harmonious, bearing much the same relation to holiness which species do to the genus.

His goodness is His "simple absolute benevolence," which tends to "the greatest possible happiness" of His creatures. But that tendency may be modified by the tendency of justice to punish wilful transgression: the latter being an end before the Divine mind as distinct and final as the former. We have no right to say justice is a mere instrument of goodness. It is a co-eternal and co-essential property, and may require what benevolence alone would not require. What are the dealings of God with persistent offenders, metaphorically denoted by fiery indignation, fierce anger, kindled wrath, and righteous judgments, but His great power put forth at the demand of a disposition to punish sin? Two distinct attributes must have

been in the thoughts of the Prophet when he prayed, "In wrath remember mercy," and of James when he wrote, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy," and of Paul when he wrote of the "severity and goodness of God : on them which fell severity ; but toward thee goodness."

There seems to be an intuitive voice in man which connects punishment with wrong-willing, not merely as a deterrent from further sin, but as the effect due to the heinousness of sin. Even if it were granted that human governors ought never to inflict penalties, except on the utilitarian principle of promoting the apparent happiness of the community, it would not follow that God was confined to the same rule. The Supreme Sovereign may delegate authority to His creatures, to be used within certain bounds, one being that to punish sin according to its intrinsic demerit shall be left to Himself, whose dominion is wide as creation, and enduring as His nature. Men may have a right to punish sin only according to the harm done to society, while God may deal with it also in its far more serious aspect, as an offence against Himself. Hence to contend that punishment in God's hands can have no meaning or purpose beyond what it has in the hands of men is a baseless assumption. In fact, the assumption is double ; for the utilitarian principle is not the only principle in either case. When an extreme villain escapes, the regret felt is not merely that society is injured, but also that relative to the delinquent himself evil conduct ought to have had its penalty. With many it is deemed cogent arguing to

infer that punishment cannot be eternal because the object of all punishment is to deter the sinner, or others by his example, from sin. We more than doubt the major proposition, that all punishment is merely corrective or deterrent; for of its truth there is not a shred of evidence. It is quite as likely that in the nature of things, and according to the principles of Divine government, of which human jurisdiction is but a small, temporary, subordinate branch, punishment may be the natural effect of sin. That it is often made instrumental of reformation is no proof of its being necessarily and always so. But we also deny the proposition that no good can accrue to God's creatures from endless punishment. The threatening or example of so fearful a doom may result in benefit to those who are thereby kept back from sin, in which case there would be goodness to the deterred, and no injustice to the sufferers.

While sin deserves punishment as sin, it is here pertinent to ask *how much it deserves*. It is easier to ask than to answer this question. Who shall tell us the exact demerit of sin as against God? There is nothing in nature, nothing in the affairs of this mortal state, to determine its precise measure,—a fact which may well rebuke the audacity that presumes to propound rules to the all-wise Governor within which He must administer retribution. On this problem the silence of God in His present government of the world should incline us to turn our ear to that clearer word where He speaks “of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.” The attitude too often assumed is as

if man would dictate to God what He ought to do, rather than humbly learn at His feet what in His sovereign wisdom He will do. It becomes us not to inform God how much evil sin involves, but to seek information from Him. And that sin *deserves* everlasting pain as its penalty is a truth of which we may be sufficiently certified by assurance of the fact, that in God's righteous government it *does* entail such penalty. Had it been more than sin's due, He never would have appointed it. It is often argued that because eternal punishment exceeds sin's desert the Just God cannot have appointed it. We deem it more conclusive to argue that, because the Just God has appointed eternal punishment, it does not exceed sin's desert. The former reasoning fails in its premises. How could it be proved apart from revelation that sin does not deserve endless punishment? or what precise extent of punishment it does deserve? We have no intuition, no known law of nature, no analogy by which to determine this. Nor does the light of inspiration anywhere intimate that endless punishment would go beyond the demerit of sin. Then since there is no discoverable standard within the range of our natural knowledge with which to gauge the evil, nor any supernatural indication that sin deserves only a limited punishment, we have reason to infer the just proportion between sin against God and an interminable penalty.

The usual argument, grounded on the alleged infinitude of the evil of sin because committed against an infinite Being, appears defective in its terms rather

than its reasoning ; partly on account of the shifting about of the word "infinite" from one sense to another. It cannot be denied that the enormity of sin is affected by its *object* as well as its subject. The acts of homicide and parricide may be exactly the same, and yet the latter more heinous than the former, because done against a father, while the other was only against a fellow-man. As an assault offered to a rightful magnanimous king would be more criminal than the same act against a fellow-subject, so an offence against the supreme majesty of God must have a demerit vastly beyond an offence to a fellow-creature. It is rebellion against supreme and original, not delegated, authority ; we have no parallel by which to measure it. If the heinousness of the one do not surpass that of the other by as much as God surpasses a fellow-man, it must at least surpass it to an incalculable degree,—for aught we know, to a degree worthy of endless retribution.

The objection that the effect of sin cannot be infinite, because the perpetrator is a finite being, is more of a quibble than an argument. The act of a finite being may have consequences without termination : (and that is the import of the word "infinite" in this case :) a boy may ask a question of his teacher, and receive in reply a thought which may go on working for ever in his mind, and produce consequences in himself and others never ceasing. A man in the morning of life may, by wrong doing, impair or retard the development of his faculties ; and though through mercy he find pardon and heaven, his blessedness may, as the effect of the early delinquency, never rise so high as it otherwise would have done. The

act may be brief and the actor finite, yet the results, natural or moral, run on for ever. A sinner accepts in time the Gospel of Jesus, and the glorious effect stretches forward for ever in his eternal life. The man and the act are finite, but the consequence unending. Then is it not as conceivable that the finite act of a finite man who rejects the Gospel may have an infinite, that is, an interminable consequence?

With these views we do not wonder that the advocates of universal restoration have never been able to fix upon any feasible approximate period when the condemned sinner shall have suffered the equivalent to his demerit. Indeed, they frequently leave the question in abeyance to propose that the suffering shall be ended by pardon.

Having said thus much to show that Divine justice is quite consistent with everlasting punishment, and not unlikely to require it, let us proceed to consider the principal objections raised ostensibly on the ground of this attribute of the Most High.

1. It is objected that between a short life of sin and a penalty without end, *i. e.*, between the *duration* of the two, there is an unjust disproportion. Much might be said in reply, on "constructive guilt," to trace the sufferings of the future state as well to the guilt incurred after death as to that incurred before; showing how sin and punishment run on as seed and fruit for ever. We confess that this, though well to be borne in mind, has always seemed to us an inadequate answer to the objection. The sentence of endless death pronounced in the great day would seem to be

for guilt already incurred. And if then, or at death, sin has been so far indulged as to insure irreversible eternal sinfulness, the whole issue still turns on the behaviour of the present life. And this solution leaves unsolved the query:—Is it just to hinge eternal misery on man's conduct during this short existence? It may, however, be well doubted whether the indulgence of a sin against God ceases with the act. Does not the disposition or principle which prompted the act continue until repented of? And if so, the present life does not measure its endurance; for in an impenitent soul it may endure for ever, and thus be co-eternal with its penalty.

But waiving the consideration of constantly increasing guilt, the objection, we note, assumes that the length of punishment must always be in a fixed proportion to the time through which the act of sin extends—a principle which in the administration of justice, is recognized by neither God nor man. Some proportion to the demerits of the case is allowed; but it is not necessarily that of duration. What is more common than for a minor crime, whose commission extends through weeks or months, to be followed by a brief imprisonment, and another crime, of more serious import, though conceived, planned, and executed within a few days or hours, to be visited with penal servitude for several years, or for life? Gehazi was but a brief space of time in committing the sin which entailed Naaman's leprosy on him and his seed for ever. He who would set up the rule that threescore years and ten of sin should be punished

with threescore years and ten of suffering, or any multiplication of that sum, would evince much more regard for his theory than for the facts and principles of justice.

A little reflection may remind us that the punishment due is not in proportion to the temporal length of the sin, but to its intrinsic evil in the sight of God. The holier a man is, the more heinous sin appears to him. Then how much more heinous must it appear to Him who is "glorious in holiness," and to whose every moral attribute it is extremely repugnant! How much more worthy of condemnation must it appear to Him who hateth iniquity, than to us whose moral perceptions at best are so dull compared with His, and are, besides, so blunted by the fall! If the actual endurance of sin determined its demerit, the duration of a virtuous act would determine its merit. But virtue is not so estimated. The atoning work of Christ was brief, yet its merit is never judged by that standard. Strictly speaking, the seat of good or ill desert is not in the act, but the will and disposition, which are hardly measurable by time. The few great deeds, which redeemed the world, were the *expression* of a disposition, inclination, or tendency, whose worth would be infinitely under-reckoned if tested by lapse of hours. Inherent *quality*, more than temporal *quantity*, decides the moral desert.

We have seen that, apart from revelation, we have no rule by which to determine the full extent of sin's due. If so, who can say of *any* duration of punishment for sin, it is more than the offence deserves?

If no period can be fixed upon, beyond which the punitive result becomes excessive, we are incapable of denying that it may be interminable.

2. It is a part of the same objection which asserts, "The profound injustice of this doctrine is seen in its making the alternative of so unalterably awful a doom hinge upon such trivial particulars, and upon merely fortuitous circumstances." And again: "It is evidently but the rankest mockery of justice to suspend an infinite woe upon an accident out of the power of the party concerned." * But if the moral states of so many are governed by "trivial particulars" and "merely fortuitous circumstances," the fact would stand opposed, not only to a perpetual hell, but *any* hell, however brief, to be endured as the punishment of behaviour in the present life. Why should millions of ages, or one age, or a day, or an hour, of future suffering hinge on such "trivial" accidents? The basis of the objection, if true, besides forbidding all future punishment of the "party concerned," would also exclude the idea that to them the present life is any probation at all. The conduct of Adam in Eden, and of Christ during His thirty-three years' humiliation, might seem "trivial particulars" on which to hang such prodigious consequences to mankind. But looking at all the powers and principles brought into exercise, that which may appear trivial in form or lapse of time assumes the magnitude of a great moral crisis,—a ponderous weight thrown into this scale or that,—a special period in creation's history. And, in the

* Alger's "Future Life," pp. 531, 532.

history of an individual member of the human race, a thing trivial by its brevity, or lack of outward circumstance and sensation, is often of deepest intrinsic moment, on account of the principles and interests involved. What may wear to us the appearance of accident may, to God, be part of a pre-arranged and righteous plan of government. Why one human probationer lives seventy years, and another only twenty; why one has many external opportunities and incentives, and another but few, must be beyond our present mental grasp; but it is equally beyond our province and power to pronounce it fortuitous, as between the individual souls and God. Unless we knew all the differences of mental constitution and habitude, all the varied susceptibilities of religious influences, all the subtile and innumerable workings of each soul towards God, all the secret power of grace bestowed on each heart, in fact, the full mental history of every man in relation to God, we are utterly incompetent to affirm of any man that his Maker does not give him sufficient opportunity to make his own deliberate choice for eternity. In this respect seventy years to one man may be worth no more than twenty to another. The advantages of Christian surroundings may have their offset in invisible adverse causes. God may crowd views and feelings into an hour with one man which are spread over years with another. One may be endued with a conscience much more sensitive than that of his neighbour. If a hundred close acquaintances were to state their most careful judgments of the spiritual state and deservings of any

given man, it is highly probable that all would widely differ from the unerring judgment of God. What they had passed as trivial accidents, or entirely overlooked, would be in God's eye vital forces working out his destiny; and where they imputed innocence, God, and his own conscience too, might write condemnation. The springs of character and conduct may be touched in ten thousand diverse ways for good or evil, altogether defying our analysis of responsibilities, motives, volitions, and spiritual forces, and equally incapacitating us for estimating the exact standing of men in the sight of God.

Ignorance of the way of salvation, or remoteness from its opportunities, may often be, not accident, but the natural result of previous opportunity abused, or gracious offers repelled, or faculties perverted; and yet cause and effect may be separated by so many intricate operations of mind and heart as to show on the surface no sort of connection. Some of the seemingly trivial turns and periods are grand, momentous epochs—stupendous crises—in the soul's career, in which are concentrated more force of human will, and gracious overture, and sense of liberty and responsibility, than at another time may be comprehended in a space of years. In truth, the degree of choice and accountability cannot be gauged by length of life, nor precisely by comparison of men's outward privileges. Our ignorance of the amount of Godward obligation of the souls of men on earth is only equalled by the presumption which, despite such ignorance, dares to proclaim the probation God confers on any man a trivial accident.

8. It is objected to the doctrine that, if true, it involves the unconditional and eternal destruction of "millions on millions of infants, idiots, maniacs, heathen, within whose hearing or power the means of salvation by a personal appropriation of the atoning merit of Christ's blood were never brought."* Here is another figure of straw set up to be ingloriously knocked down. To oppose the doctrine of eternal punishment by first inventing, and then attacking, this imaginary picture of indiscriminate damnation, is like attempting to destroy a worthy man by burning him in effigy. As the real man has no identity with the effigy, so our doctrine has none with this ghastly caricature. It no more teaches unconditional destruction than does the theory of limited punishment. As to those who die in infancy, we have the Saviour's authority for believing they inherit the kingdom of heaven. As to idiots below moral capacity, everything in God's government warrants a similar hope for them. As to maniacs, they will not be condemned for matters beyond their rational control. And as to the heathen, their condition is awful indeed; but they are not destitute of law, (Rom. ii. 14, 15,) neither can they be denied all benefit of the Redeemer's death. How many of them, through Him, may find mercy, or how that mercy may be available to them, we cannot tell. But we are sure the Judge of all the earth will do right, and render to each according to his deeds: whatever number may perish, He will not allow one to perish from lack of opportunity to escape.

* Alger's "Future Life," p. 532.

4. Of all shallow objections, one of the shallowest is that which urges the impracticability of endless punishment, on the ground of its precluding *different degrees*,—more stripes to greater criminals, and fewer stripes to smaller,—lighter and “sorer punishment,” according to character. It were as reasonable to say there was no difference between twelve months’ imprisonment with hard labour, and twelve months’ imprisonment without it. If eternal punishment did not admit of degrees, neither would eternal rewards; and yet the parable of the talents makes it clear that future blessedness, though eternal, will nevertheless be of different grades. Any given number in perdition may have gradations in the *intensity* of suffering as numerous as their persons, and exactly corresponding to their grades of guilt, without any difference in the duration. If a comparatively small offender deserve a lighter penalty for ever, and a greater offender a “sorer punishment” equally endless, sameness of duration will not in the least prevent their different deserts from being equitably meted out. Equality of continuance admits easily of degrees of misery as fine and as manifold as are the deserts of the condemned. One might have thought this distinction too obvious to need statement; yet we frequently meet with language like the following gross misrepresentation:—“The popular doctrine of eternal punishment is *unjust*, because it overlooks the difference in the sins of men, launching on all whom it embraces one infinite penalty of indiscriminating damnation.”* The authors of such

* Alger’s “Future Life,” p. 530.

sentences inexcusably overlook the difference between *intensity* and *duration* of punishment, (though it has been repeatedly pointed out by previous writers,) and launch "undiscriminating damnation" on those who hold the doctrine intelligently, and those who incorporate with it their own absurdities.

5. The writer just quoted looks equally askance when he adds, "There is the grossest injustice in the first assumption or fundamental ground on which the theory we are opposing rests. That theory does not teach that men are actually damned eternally on account of their own personal sins, but on account of *original sin*: the eternal tortures of hell are the transmitted penalty hurled on all the descendants of Adam, save those who in some way avoid it, in consequence of his primal transgression." "The doctrine before us" "sends untold myriads to hell for ever for no other sin than that of simply having been born children of humanity." * If there be theologians who would endorse the monstrosities thus delineated for them, it is no part of our function to defend them. But we have reason to protest against the attempt to make the doctrine of perpetual punishment responsible for any such enormities. There is nothing in it to necessitate or imply them; and any attack on them, however triumphant, does not touch either its truthfulness or equity. We believe in original sin. But we believe, also, that the disabilities entailed by our relation to the first Adam are so provided against, by our relation to the second Adam, that every man con-

* Alger's "Future Life," p. 531.

signed to hell will suffer no more than he deserves for his own sin. When the Judge charges those on the left hand with the sin for which they are to "go away into everlasting punishment," it is charged upon them as their own. "Then shall He reward every man according to *his* works."

If justice be a perfection of God, its display may be a manifestation of His glory. And if the endless perdition of the impenitent be a righteous judgment, there will be in it an endless display of that spotless attribute which men have endeavoured to obscure, but which He has taken means to express boldly by word and deed: possibly it may wear a lustre which, at present, we can but dimly apprehend. Many disingenuous efforts have been made to distort this view into a grim misrepresentation of God as delighting in torture for the sake of torture, and of orthodox believers as deriving pleasure from the mere thought of the misery of the lost. When the adherents of the doctrine are allowed to state their own meaning, they never hint the slightest idea of God or themselves as delighting in misery for the sake of itself, any more than they would charge the Roman judge with condemning to death his two guilty sons from mere hatred to his own children, or than they would ascribe Solomon's judgment to a mere desire to spite the pseudo-mother. Does the unflinching integrity of our judges exemplify the majesty of our laws, and the strength of our constitution? Far more may the righteous majesty of the Universal Sovereign display His abhorrence of sin, by enforcing His holy laws

against it throughout His everlasting reign. Believing the glory of His power, wisdom, and love, shall shine for ever, we have reason to believe as firmly the glory of His justice shall never be extinguished.

II. *Goodness*.—Bishop Butler speaks of a goodness in God which “may be pleased with this moral piety of moral agents in and for itself,” and also as “a bare single disposition to produce happiness.” We now use the word more especially in the latter sense, as in that sense it is deemed repugnant to our doctrine. It matters little what words we employ, if their meaning be understood. The predicate will vary with the subject. This aspect of the Divine character might be thought by Universalists the very citadel of their strength. Not unfrequently they betray impatience of close exposition of Scripture, or rigid argumentation from the irrevocable claims of justice. But on this ground they seem to feel at home, as they dilate on the lovingkindness of their creed, and the harsh rigour of ours. Goodness, however, separated from mawkish sentimentalism, and consonant with all other attributes in the bright circle of Divine perfections, is as much our theme as theirs; and, we venture to think, lends no countenance to their peculiar dogmas. We delight to contemplate with humble adoration the pure unspeakable love out of which came the wondrous work of redemption, and all the blessings in creation. But we dare not resolve it into a blind impulse, intent on making every creature happy, despite that creature’s firm determination to the contrary.

One of the favourite weapons wielded against the

doctrine of endless perdition, is the allegation that it is contrary to the goodness of God. It is contended that if God delights in the welfare of His creatures, He never can allow suffering, in any part of His dominion, to go on without end; that, however far fallen a creature may be, God's essential goodness cannot but interpose for his rescue. The misery may outlast the whole course of time, and stretch millions of ages beyond; but Divine love, it is affirmed, cannot allow it to last for ever: sin and suffering are both opposed to benevolence, which, as it has Omnipotence at its beck, must sooner or later overcome, and annihilate them. This view is generally backed up by supposed parallels between the working of Divine love and the action of love in fathers to their disobedient children, or the commiseration and relenting of injured men towards vanquished foes. The prodigal is received home, the subdued convict is set at large, the penitent outlaw is reinstated, the destitute suppliant debtor is forgiven. And thence it is triumphantly demanded, if God's love is less than man's? and if His benevolence will allow the door of hell to be kept closed to its prisoners, while the smaller compassion of man would hasten to open it? This argument, which appeals to the sympathies rather than the reason, rapidly and rhetorically urged, will often produce the semblance of conviction, especially where fancy and sensibility are apt to predominate over judgment. But before calm intelligent scrutiny it withers away.

In the first place, the attempted parallels are spurious. It is always fraught with risk to set up

man as a pattern to his Maker. God, as a Judge, may have to do what man, as a mere father or fellow-man, would not. It is not the benevolence of a father which passes and enforces sentence on the breaker of civil law, but the rectitude of the judge and penal officers. It is not as a Father that God consigns the guilty to remediless woe, but as a righteous Administrator of His own righteous law. If He were a Father only, and not a Judge and moral Ruler, He might act only on the promptings of paternal tenderness.

It is assumed, in the second place, in these comparisons, that the lost approach God in humble penitent prayer as the prodigal approached his father. But of this there is not the slightest intimation in the Bible ; and as little likelihood, from the natural tendency of depraved spirits to deeper malignity. Scripture, and the nature of the case, lead us to think, the souls cast down for incorrigible rebellion, however much they may chafe and writhe under the yoke, will retain their impenitent spirit of rebellion. A king may pardon a rebel ; but not before he has reason to think the obnoxious disposition is abandoned. An injured man may well withhold forgiveness from an adversary who continues to evince the same hostile feeling. Nor can we see even the fitness of pardon, much less its probability, for those who, notwithstanding their punitive suffering, are never represented as the subjects of sincere repentance.

In the next place these comparisons assume the certain conversion of the moral nature of spirits fallen

into the lowest abyss of perversity. Suppose God's goodwill were fully prepared to restore them to holiness and happiness; (for happiness is impossible without holiness;) how is it certain that all such spirits would be *willing* to be made holy? If moral liberty remains, it is more than possible some of them would persist in choosing sin. If so, how could even benevolence, to say nothing of justice, restore them? Would benevolence coerce, that is, destroy their moral nature, in order to save them? That would be a salvation by, at least partial, annihilation. On the other hand, their retention of a moral nature implies a will to choose, and a possibility of always choosing, the wrong, which is tantamount to a possibility of never being restored, although there were nothing but benevolence to deal with. To say there is a probability that all will at some time choose the right, is to say that universal restoration is at most only a probability. But even that probability is swept away when we consider that beings so deeply self-polluted are never likely to incline to holiness.

Further, whatever feasibility might appear in this argument from benevolence, it vanishes as soon as we attempt to carry out the same mode of reasoning to its legitimate results. If eternal evil be impossible because opposed to the tendency of Divine benevolence, *all* evil must be equally impossible for the same reason. All pain, and all sin, are opposed to mere benevolence. But if it thence follows that they are impossible, what shall we make of the *fact* that so much both moral and natural evil does exist, and has clung to our species

and to the fallen angels? Let us suppose an angel anterior to the entrance of sin and pain into the universe, reasoning on the possibilities of that universe. On the principle of the universalist and annihilationist, he would have argued that God, being essentially and infinitely good, and having all power, could never allow evil to come into existence, because directly opposed to that benevolence. What might that angel have thought of his *non potest* when by and by he saw sin and pain enter a lofty prince and his angels, and subsequently play havoc with the human race? Clearly it is as difficult to reconcile the *existence of any* evil with supreme benevolence, as it is to reconcile the ceaseless continuance of evil. But as the palpable stern reality of evil falsifies the presumed impossibility in the one case, so in the other it renders similar presumption groundless. It is beside the mark to say the difficulty is not with the *existence*, but with the *eternity* of evil. The mode of reasoning from our ideas of goodness to the non-eternity of evil, if sound, would be equally forceful against its existence. The only difference is one of degree, not of principle. Tell us how to harmonize goodness with the allowance of sin and pain for a moment, and we can then harmonize it with sin and pain abiding for ever. The flaw in the universalist's argument is not repaired by his pleading that Divine goodness might permit the entrance of evil because there were reasons for it. For there may be reasons as potent for permitting its continuance. And as some or all of the reasons in the former case might be undiscoverable to a creature

antecedently to the fact, so in the latter case may they be as yet undiscoverable to us.

It might be urged that moral and natural evil was a possibility necessary to the creation of a moral being, and that it was better on the part of God to create such a being with that possibility than not to create him at all. So far we could agree with the explanation which throws the responsibility of the existence of evil on the creature who chose it, and not on Divine benevolence. But the moral liberty of the creature, which explains the existence of evil without impugning Divine goodness, may explain the perpetuity of evil sufficiently to leave the same glorious attribute unsullied. If liability to evil was a necessity of moral freedom, liability to perpetual evil may be equally so.

Should it be contended that sovereign goodness may allow terminable evil as a means to a benevolent end, while eternal evil cannot serve such purpose, our answer is twofold. *Firstly*, allowance of endless evil may, for aught we know, be a means to some good end, visible or invisible, to mortal men. And, *secondly*, if God's love must oblige Him to devise means to dispense with perpetual evil, it must have equally obliged Him to do the same in respect to all evil. Turn the matter about as we will, there is no denying that if God must forbid the eternity of evil because opposed to His goodness, He must also, on the same ground, have forbidden the entrance of evil into the universe, and its endurance to the present time. But, in point of fact, He has *not* forbidden its entrance and continu-

ance hitherto, which nullifies the contention set up, that His goodness cannot tolerate its existence beyond any limit in the future.

The style of reasoning against the doctrine in dispute often runs on the principle that God's goodness binds Him to the performance of every conceivable act which appears good to us. Had an angel reasoned thus when all the newly-created universe was "very good," he might have argued that more happiness was conceivable had God made a *larger* universe. But that might have been said, however large it had been. However many happy creatures He had made, it might still have been said He could have made more, and so produced more happiness. But this were to reason as if benevolence were His only attribute, and as if we knew all the limits and conditions of creature happiness. The same remark applies when it is insinuated that the infinitude of Divine goodness precludes eternal punishment. If it were so, it ought equally to exclude existing evil, and to augment the present amount of happiness infinitely.

The argument from God's goodness against eternal punishment is further fallacious in assuming that the appointment of such a penalty is not, and cannot be in any degree, the effect of goodness. It may be justly penal to the sufferers, and yet benevolently *exemplary* to others. This idea was in the Apostle's mind when he wrote of Sodom and Gomorrah, who are "set forth for an *example*, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." It is well known that the threatening of a greater penalty is a more powerful deterrent to wrong-doing

than a smaller : and when God seeks to bring a man out of sin by the revealed alternative of endless pain, it were an extremely narrow view of Divine love which would deny it that method of proceeding. For anything we know, God may go on creating moral beings for ever, and for ever find for them a powerful warning against ruin in the example of those whose unceasing "damnation is just." Does it not seem that the example of the angels fallen to "everlasting bonds" was intended to admonish and benefit us ? But if it were granted that no trace of goodness could be at present discovered by us in the appointment of endless punishment, should we be in a position to conclude there *can be none* ? or that it may never develop any aspect of love to any part of creation ? or that it can only be inflicted "for the sole purpose of torture ?"

Were it yielded, for the sake of argument, that no such sign of good could be traced, we should still have to note that we see no necessity to find goodness in *every act* of God to every person concerned. To punish may be *per se* an act of pure justice, needing no intermixture of love to justify it, or to render it possible. Hence justice is sufficient to account for the enforcement of endless ruin, even were there no way of explaining it on the ground of benevolence. If every act of God must engage *all* His attributes, the restoration of fiends and fallen men by the mere fiat of love and power will be impossible ; for after the establishment and revelation of God's system of government, the act would be destitute of justice. So that Universalism, in adopting the notion that every attri-

bute must appear in every act, had better consider how that notion would close the very door it is so anxious to open by a Divine pardon for the lost. To put the matter in the mildest form, we observe that although the simple tendency of love might not perpetuate the punishment, neither would it terminate it, except with the full consent of righteousness.

Universalism seems to assume that *everything* in God's creation must necessarily be the object of His benevolence, and thence to infer the mercy of God to lost souls. But the assumption is contrary to fact. Inanimate matter is a creature of God, but, strictly speaking, not an object of His love. If insensate matter is outside the range of the Creator's benevolence by reason of its nature, so may lost spirits have put themselves out of its reach by their abuse of liberty and by self-depravation. God's love is not infinite in relation to space, but in fixing on all objects whose nature, character, and moral relations will admit of it.

Much is said now-a-days about eternal punishment being "a moral impossibility," as transubstantiation is "a physical impossibility." If this mean impossible because contrary to the moral attributes of God and the moral nature of man, (as transubstantiation is to the essential attributes of matter,) it amounts to a *mere assertion*, which these pages are designed to disprove. One writer* endeavours to demonstrate the opposition of the doctrine to God's love by a comparison, thus:—"Two and two make four." "If all

* Rev. S. Minton, M.A., "Glory of Christ," etc.

the arithmeticians in the world assured you that two and two made five, you would *not* believe them." To the compatibility of eternal evil in hell with the existence of a perfectly loving and blessed God, he simply replies "that you might as well try to persuade me that two and two make five, or that the three angles of a triangle are equal to four right angles." How strange that the fallacy of this attempted parallel could escape its author's attention, who evidently dwells on it with special complacency, as if it had the double virtue of illustration and proof, whereas it has neither! To suit his purpose, the impossibility of eternal evil ought to force itself on *all* minds to which the thought is presented; just as all minds understanding the meaning of the terms reject the proposition that two and two are five. Let the meaning of the words "two and two are four" be clearly apprehended by any mind, and it has no power to resist their truth. But the idea that God's love renders endless suffering impossible has been clearly apprehended by tens of thousands of minds which nevertheless could and *did* reject it altogether. When such pretended impossibility is as certain as that two and two are four, all minds once perceiving it will have no choice but to accept its truth. That period, judging from the evidence hitherto produced, seems to be very far distant. All the sophistry in the world could not induce even a considerable minority of civilized men to think two and two are five. But a vast proportion *do* believe in the truth of eternal punishment. We know that belief in it is *intellectually possible*, because

it is so extensively *actual*; and that the thing believed is *morally possible*, because it is in no way discordant with the known perfections of the Supreme Governor.

The dogma of transubstantiation requires us to believe the same portion of matter is in two places at the same time, which is repugnant to its ascertained essential properties. It tells us the whole body of Christ is in heaven, and at the same instant is wholly present in each mass on earth, which may be celebrated in ten thousand places at once. If we think of matter as matter, transubstantiation requires us to believe a certain portion is in a certain place, and not there, at the same time; which is a contradiction, and which the intellect rejects with a promptitude proportionate to the perspicuity with which it looks at the proposition. Transubstantiation, again, supposes one portion of matter to become another portion; that is, to exchange its identity, and yet to retain it; that it (bread and wine) is itself, and not itself, at the same time; which is another contradiction. Let those who ring forth their declamatory charge of "moral impossibility," show such contradictions as these in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Until they do so, their proclaiming it on a level with transubstantiation is the mere flourish of trumpets *before* the battle; and, in theological discussion, is a common symptom of weakness.

III. *Wisdom*.—As wisdom denotes the adaptation of the best means to the best ends, its relation to our subject has been to some extent involved in the considerations already presented. Many of the attacks on

the doctrine before us impugn the wisdom which could appoint, or allow, an unending penalty. The objection generally means that the doctrine cannot be true, because it would imply defect in the wisdom of the Divine Governor. The grounds of this objection are such as have been already dealt with. Two or three thoughts may be fitly added.

Of the wisdom of the arrangement we are at present very incompetent judges. On the whole compass of our knowledge may be written, "Lo, these are *parts* of His ways, but how little a portion is heard of Him!" Much of the vast plan of government of which human rewards and punishments form part, is out of sight. Enough is manifest to assure us there is a perfect system of government; but not to inform us of all its ends and means. Enough is clear to point us to life eternal, and to lay the responsibility of missing it upon ourselves; but not enough to acquaint us with all the reasons for the plan. As a child may not perceive all the "whys and wherefores" of the parental discipline to which he is subject, and yet may have implicit confidence in its wisdom, so in this life, which is a sort of childhood, our knowledge of what the great Ruler does far exceeds our knowledge of *why* He does it. "For He giveth not account of any of His matters." "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Where His ways might *seem to us* unwise, it is not for us to deny their equity, or question their excellence; but at least to suspend our fallible judgment till we are in possession of fuller *data to*

afford it a solid base. Such modesty stands out in striking contrast to the arrogance which hastily arraigns the doctrine of permanent punishment before its petty, ill-informed tribunal, and pronounces against a revealed truth because *it* cannot see all the reasons thereof. It ill becomes us to measure the thoughts of the Infinite One by our own. Rather let us, where our mental vision fails us, fall in with the Apostle's devout exclamation, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

It is too often inferred that where God does not reveal His reasons for what He does, He has none, but does it without reason on His mere sovereign pleasure. A moment's reflection discovers how preposterous this is. Is God bound to render to man, from the outset, all the reasons in His mind for His acts in relation to man? and, until He do so, is man at liberty to conclude there are none? * Did He render to Jacob a reason for Joseph's disappearance? yet, after many years, the patriarch found it out. Did He from the first furnish Job with all His reasons for allowing him to suffer? yet subsequent events amply justified the ways of God. Has He fully un-

* One of the most zealous opponents of endless suffering (Rev. S. Minton, "Glory of Christ," etc.) confesses: "The existence of evil is in itself a tax upon our faith. We have to believe in God's love, notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary." And he admits there may be reasons for it, and for the Atonement, at present out of sight, which will appear when we have "all the facts before us, and minds capable of grasping them." So say we of the doctrine he so fiercely attacks.

folded to us why one human being is called out of the world in infancy, and another is allowed to live through a probation of three or four score years? or why the interest and destiny of one man seem to be so greatly affected by the conduct of others? or why the spirits of the departed are denied communication with those still in the flesh? How, then, can we say there are not in the Divine mind considerations which, when divulged, will prove the appointment of everlasting punishment a perfectly wise part of a perfectly wise system of universal and eternal government? To Christian faith the clear revelation of a doctrine in Scripture is sufficient to insure its reception, though its reasonableness may be partly hidden behind the clouds which separate the present from the future.

But though their absence could not prove it false, *are there no reasons* for the doctrine within reach of our present vision? Not to repeat what has been said in relation to justice and goodness, we may refer to the *tremendous motive* which the doctrine presents to man's fears. This motive, we maintain, is legitimate and powerful.

1. Attempts have been made to extrude prudential fear of punishment from the category of religious motives. We are recommended to be virtuous not for virtue's rewards, but for its own sake; to eschew sin not from fear of its consequences, but from love of holiness. To serve God, it is suggested, because of rewards and punishments, is sordid, selfish, and unhealthy. If there were any truth in this, it would tell as well against limited punishment as unlimited.

Such transcendental virtue, however, is not only inapplicable to the normal and actual condition of humanity, but contrary to the method pursued in the Divine government. Jude exhorts to the "love of God" by the prospect of "eternal life," and advises that some be saved with "compassion," others "with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Yet we are now-a-days told, "We are saved by hope, not by fear;" the first half of the sentence being a quotation from Paul, the second half an uninspired man's contradiction of Jude, which looks very much like an attempt to wed God's truth to man's lie. Paul avows, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the *terror* of the Lord, we persuade men." And he urges to "patient continuance in well-doing" by the hope of "eternal life," and dissuades from "unrighteousness" by the dread of "indignation and wrath." Jesus says, "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear Him which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." Those who affirm that the Philippian jailor, when he cried, "What must I do to be saved?" could know nothing of eternal punishment, forget that Paul and Silas had been previously preaching in the city and neighbourhood, and were as likely to preach the terror of the Lord there as elsewhere. Was it so did in Job who said, "Destruction from God was a terror to me?" But to quote all the texts where God appeals to men to serve Him from motives of reward

and punishment, would be to quote a large portion of the sacred oracles. Adam in Paradise, men in unbelief and sin, believers in Christ, all have these motives pressed upon them. If in some distant part of creation there be intelligences whose virtues are exalted above all considerations of agreeable or disagreeable effects to themselves, (which is extremely improbable,) that certainly is not the condition of man on earth. There may be men in whom regard for personal consequences operates in greater proportion than in others. A sinner debased by gross ignorance and iniquity may be first awakened and alarmed by thoughts of hell, and, turning to God, may gradually come more and more under the power of higher motives. But whatever his growth in grace, we cannot conceive of his growing out of all regard for his best interests. We have, therefore, no option but to relegate this notion of absolute disinterestedness to the limbo of overweening and impracticable imaginations.

2. The *power* of motives acting on our fears is incalculable, especially if the object of fear be something really dreadful. If the power be in proportion to the magnitude of the evil, how much greater the influence of eternal than terminable perdition! A rather close observation, extended over several years, has confirmed our conviction, that numbers of men have been induced to give ear, and conscience, and heart to religion by the threatening of endless pain, who would probably have run all risk of a penalty which they knew would come to an end. Indeed, the superior power of this motive to that of limited

punishment is virtually acknowledged by those who demur to the doctrine on the ground that it is enough to drive those mad who believe it, and to stop the ordinary operation of commercial and civil affairs. The statistics of lunatic asylums refute the charge that religion is a principal cause of insanity; and where it is assigned as the cause, it would be more correct to call it the *occasion* of developing a pre-existent malady. Madness may sometimes be produced by the infliction of human justice, by the birth of a child, by loss of friends, or by loss of property. Does it thence follow that Divine wisdom should forbid their occurrence? As to temporal affairs, attention to earthly duties may enter largely into preparation for the world to come, and it would be an error to neglect them in order to attend to religion only. But in thousands and thousands of cases it were devoutly to be wished the concerns of time were made secondary to those of eternity. Still, the objection to the doctrine of everlasting punishment, on the plea that it would produce such commotion in the human mind and the affairs of life, though futile for the purpose intended, is a concession of the amazing motive power of the doctrine.

With some minds fear seems to be the only emotion that can at first be acted upon religiously. This may often be witnessed in persons who discover themselves on the threshold of eternity. The immediate prospect of an endless doom, which, a dozen or a couple of years before, had no influence over them, now stirs their deepest concern. What is it but the dread of a penalty

which they believe eternal? They have put off repentance from boyhood to manhood, and then to the last possible stage, and are now alarmed at sight of most imminent danger. Assure them that is *not* the last opportunity, and with too many the concern will vanish.* We are not aware that Universalism and Annihilationism, with their weaker motive, have reclaimed any considerable proportion of mankind from sin to holiness, and especially from the most ignorant and godless classes, nor have they given proof of their power to convert the world. Their converts are generally indebted to the opposite teaching, and many of them are proselytes from the ranks of orthodoxy. As a rule, preachers who have been most successful in awakening religious concern, were believers and preachers of eternal suffering for sin. Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his work on "Methodism,"

* "They which imagine the pains inflicted for sin to be either small or short have but a slender motive to innocence or repentance; but such as firmly believe them sharp and endless, have by virtue of that faith within themselves a proper and natural spur and incitement to avoid them: for 'who can dwell with everlasting burnings?'"—BISHOP PEARSON, on the Creed, p. 588.

"Whoever considers how ineffectual the threatening even of eternal torments is to the greatest part of sinners will soon be satisfied that a less penalty than that of eternal sufferings would, to the far greatest part of mankind, have been in all probability of little or no force."—ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON, Works, vol. iii., p. 88.

"The higher the threatening runs, so much the more mercy and goodness there is in it; because it is so much the more likely to hinder men from incurring the penalty that is threatened."—*Ibid.*, p. 89.

attributes the extraordinary revival of the last century very much to the prominence given to this doctrine by the Methodist evangelists. "The reformers of the last century taught constantly, as doctrines both equally true, *God's eternal hatred against sin, and God's love towards sinners*. They knew nothing of a 'love lower than hell,' and a heaven where holy and unholy are all at length to find admission."* Edwards, and the principal instruments of the great revivals of religion in America, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, were its firm believers and earnest promulgators. He must be sadly warped or infatuated who thinks that to drop this motive for that of limited punishment, to be followed by restoration or annihilation, would promote religion. That step would doubtless with many remove the last barrier to reckless irreligion and vice, and would pare down the enormity of sin to an excusable triviality. We have reason to fear many would go on sinning as long as they knew there was a chance of ultimate deliverance from its curse; and thus the belief that the punishment was not *necessarily* endless might render it *actually* endless. Many such souls, by the far stronger dread inspired by danger of permanent pain, are much more likely to be arrested in the evil course, and induced to flee from the wrath to come. A disaffected son of a kind and respectable father declares his determination to enlist as a common soldier, and thus fling away a costly education, and afflict the hearts of his family. He presses his father

* "The Christian Leaders of the Last Century. By Rev. J. C. Ryle, B.A.," p. 28.

not to retain him. The father, whose word is known to be his bond, failing to dissuade him by other motives, at last tells him that if he *will* go he shall never be bought off. Then the prospect darkens, and the reprobate son, under that additional motive, quails and complies with the parental will. Assuming the rightfulness of the father's wish, was there not wisdom in that additional deterrent? And may there not be wisdom somewhat similar, but vastly higher, in the appointment of irremediable ruin as a deterrent to men bent on rebellion against the sovereignty of God?

The doctrine has its power, too, as an incentive to Christian ministers and people to put forth their utmost endeavour for the rescue of men over whom so fearful a doom impends. Much is said against preaching "damnation," and in favour of setting forth the attractions of love, and rewards of heaven. It may be all well as far as it frowns on wild, imaginative pictures of hell, or harsh, repulsive methods of presenting the terror of the Lord. But the preaching that conceals, or curtails, the threatenings of perpetual misery, is unlike that of the Master and His Apostles. It is inadequate to the needs of unawakened souls, recreant to its solemn mission, and cruelly perilous to the immortal spirits to whom it professes to deliver God's grand message. We are no advocates for the preaching of this doctrine by those who do not believe it. As soon should we wish an Atheist to preach the perfections of God, or an Unitarian the Trinity. We deprecate the scepticism which rejects the truth, but still more the dishonesty which would

proclaim what it disbelieves. Let none belie his convictions. But where it has impressed itself on the minds of preachers or people, how much ought it to intensify their desire to save the perishing !

IV. *Truth.*—Archbishop Tillotson, who appears to have had a special taste for diluting the cardinal truths of revelation, has connected his name with a theory which, if it came from some quarters, might be taken for a burlesque on the most serious aspect of Divine government. To meet the objection respecting disproportion of crime to penalty, he suggests that, though eternal punishment is most plainly threatened, *it may not be carried out* against those who incur the sentence of it, “who may have an end mercifully put to their sufferings.” God, he tells us, “may, without any injury to the party threatened, remit and abate as much as He pleaseth of the punishment that He hath threatened.”* How closely this resembles the devil’s suasive to Eve, “Ye shall not surely die!”

This theory is by no means necessary to meet the objection it is intended to answer. We have met it in another way, without lowering the Divine character. This theory defends the justice of God by reflecting on another phase of His glory: for, supposing the omission of the deserved and threatened penalty be no injustice to the guilty party, may it not be unjust to others, who, having taken God at His word, have acted on the conviction that the penalty would be enforced on all who resisted His will to the end ?

1. Our chief objection to this view is, that it is

* Works, vol. iii., pp. 84, 85.

contrary to the *truth* of God. How can it be possible for a being of such immaculate and unchangeable veracity to falsify His own solemn word, even to spare a creature's suffering? If He "cannot lie," if He is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," "a God of truth and without iniquity," "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," "abundant in goodness and truth," "and that will by no means clear the guilty," how can there be the slenderest expectation of His speaking one way and acting another? Sin-loving humanity may fondly cling to the notion; but either it is utterly delusive, or God's truth is a fiction.

Tillotson anticipates this accusation, and tries to obviate it by reference to the case of Nineveh, which was threatened with destruction in forty days, and yet was not destroyed. But, on examination, the supposed parallel disappears. The threatening of endless misery to the guilty at the great day is *unconditional*. While there is an entire absence of all idea, expressed or implied, that the sentence may not be carried out, the contrary idea is clearly taught. The wicked are warned that after a certain period of rebellion they may call, but will get no answer; they may seek, but shall not find: as the tree falleth, so it lieth;—the unholy shall be unholy still. But the threatenings against men and communities which have been exchanged for pardon were made on *conditions*, expressed or understood. Thus the people of Nineveh did not regard their overthrow as absolute when "they believed God," and repented in dust and ashes, and cried "mightily

unto God," and turned "every one from his evil way," saying, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?" Jonah had the same understanding. Hence, when the impending overthrow was not executed, he said, "O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." Jeremiah states at large the same principle in reference to God's dealing with nations. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." No such contingency is annexed to the judgments on individual sinners in the world to come. There is, therefore, nothing in the non-fulfilment of conditional threatenings relative to this probationary life to warrant hope of failure in the absolute decision of the great last day. Indeed, if there were any such ground of hope, it would be much harder to reconcile with the truth of God, than would endless suffering with His justice.

2. It is further contrary to God's *oath*. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches that the threatening of

exclusion from the heavenly Canaan is as certain to heedless unbelievers as exclusion from the earthly Canaan was to those of whom God swore in His wrath that they should not enter in. Lest guilty men should presume on a way of escape hereafter, despite the immutability of His Word, He enstamps the dread truth with an oath for confirmation. Tillotson admits the accuracy of this reasoning, and makes the weak and vague reply that the threatening "doth not seem to reach any further than to the exclusion of impenitent sinners out of heaven, and their falling finally short of the rest and happiness of the righteous." But surely, if they never have "rest and happiness," and retain a sentient nature, they must be in misery. If they are delivered from misery, and retain their sentient nature, they must have some degree of happiness. So that to be shut out of happiness, whether called heaven or Canaan, is to be shut up in misery, according to the sure Word and unchangeable oath of God.

3. This theory is contrary to the *wisdom* of God, as it would mar His government with an inconsistency sufficient to shake the confidence of His subjects. Let them understand throughout His kingdom that nothing is certain in the way of punishment until realized, not even when proclaimed by His Word and oath, and the effect would be to lower rather than exalt their views of His wisdom. We agree with the archbishop, when he says, "A threatening hath quite lost its force if we once come to believe that it will not be executed." But is it not equally true that its force is lessened to

those who come to believe with the archbishop, that it *may* fail of execution? Tillotson, who never attempts to deny that the Scriptures teach it, thinks the threat of endless punishment is intended to have a salutary effect on the fears and behaviour of men. But how can that be, if they adopt his notion that it may not be carried out? If God intended men to *believe* it would be absolutely enforced, how came He to let Dr. Tillotson discover and publish the secret that it may not be enforced? If it will not be carried out, God knows it. How, then, can He tell men that it certainly will be carried out? Is the author of this theory more honest than God, in lifting the veil from the truth? Impossible! Then the theory is much more likely than God's threatenings to be false. This notion of a loop-hole for the eternally condemned reduces the most solemn warnings of Scripture to a bugbear, and reflects on the spotless veracity and wisdom of the Infinite Jehovah. There is, therefore, nothing better for it than utter and merited reprobation.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUBJECT VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION.

"But for the everlasting punishments in another world, that belong to unreconciled sinners, who refuse to know the things of their peace, the Gospel constitution hath made the connexion firm and unalterable, between their continuing, unrepented wickedness, and those punishments." — JOHN HOWE.

ALTHOUGH the Word of God is not given in the shape of a theological system, it none the less contains a system or plan of dealing with mankind, of which the mediatorial work of Christ is the trunk. There are ends and means,—principles and proceedings,—causes and effects,—all more or less related to the office of the Incarnate Son and to each other, constituting a grand scheme, whose parts stand or fall together. The outline of it is the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ, emanating from God's love for fallen man, re-endowing him with the powers and responsibilities of a free agent, and amply providing for his reconciliation with God, and his inheritance of a blessed immortality: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

The several elements of that scheme branch one out

of another so naturally that the cardinal truths of the Gospel cannot consistently be separated in our faith. A man may profess to believe in the vicarious atonement of Christ, and deny the guilt which it aimed at removing; but his position is irrational, as he believes in contradictions. For the same reason, he who gives up one of the great truths of Christianity,—say the atoning death or the resurrection of Jesus,—cannot consistently stop there, but must go on in the dark, downward path of Unitarianism, Rationalism, or Atheism, with its “blackness of darkness for ever.” For the same reason we say the doctrine of endless suffering for sin is so closely interwoven with the mediatorial scheme that to eliminate it is to maim the whole. We do not say a man must be lost who does not know and believe every part of that scheme of redemption. It is not for us to say with how little Christian knowledge an earnest seeker may be saved. But we do say that to adopt some of the doctrines of the Gospel, and repudiate others, is an irrational and impracticable attempt to fuse together truth and falsehood.*

* How irrational and impracticable is the attempt to weld Universalism with evangelical truth is illustrated by some striking failures: *e.g.*, some of the modern preachers of Universalism, as Rely and Murray, (1781,) were in other respects Calvinists. But “about 1790,” says a UNIVERSALIST historian, “commenced that change in the character of American Universalism which the lovers of the Gospel must ever deplore, and which to the great majority of American professors has proved so agreeable. Murray was, and continued to the last to be, a most decided Calvinist in all his leading

1. The Gospel distinguishes between redemption as *procured* for the whole human race by the death of Christ, and redemption as *realized* by individuals. The one was provision of salvation at a great price; the other is its actual bestowment: or, as John Goodwin

religious views. The sentiments of Winchester, (a well-known champion of Universalism,) originally Calvinistic, latterly tended to Arminianism. Hosea Ballou, who had been brought up among the Baptists, and is still alive, was led, about the period last-named, to make an assault upon the Deity of our Lord, the necessity and efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, and kindred Scriptural doctrines. His views, for which no doubt preparation had been made by the theology and success of Winchester, were rapidly and greedily embraced. The pride of human reason which they flattered, and the spurious liberality which they tended to promote, rendered them acceptable to man's fleshly mind. *Facilis descensus Averni*. Downward quickly was the progress. Unitarianism, reaching ever to a desire to court alliance with those who reject it, is now one of the leading features of American Universalism." But in the twenty years since this was written, it has descended, in many of its adherents, below Unitarianism to the *Spiritualistic* medley of infidelity and superstition. Adds the same writer, respecting W. Vidler, Mr. Winchester's successor in England: "The abandonment, on his part, of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and the substitution for them of sentiments more consonant to the fleshly mind of man, were attended with the usual results. Universalism either merged in the dead sea of Unitarianism, or wore itself out. The labours of Scarlet, and Creighton, and of Rait, Coward, and Jeffries among Rellian Universalists, were insufficient to arrest the downward current." "The defection from Divine truth" went on "in London, as well as Wisbeach, Birmingham, Chatham, and other places in England."—DR. DAVID THOM, "Universalist," January, 1850. Observe, this is the testimony of one of themselves.

puts it, "God did only antecedently intend the actual salvation of all men, by the death of Christ; but consequently the salvation only of those who believe." Jesus redeemed all men to the capability of eternal life when He "gave Himself a ransom for all;" "tasted death for every man;" "became the propitiation for" "the sins of the whole world." He actually confers eternal life on all who comply with the conditions on which it is offered. In the one sense He is "the Saviour of all men;" in the other sense, "specially of those that believe." "Justification of life" was procured for all who had come under condemnation with Adam. But "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." In the offence "sin abounded." In the grand provision which covered its whole length and breadth, and obtained eternal life for all, "grace much more abounded;" while its abundance is vastly augmented by the eternal salvation personally conferred on all who will receive it. His death provided salvation for all men, without any voluntary condition on their part, inasmuch as they had fallen without any choice of their own. He bestows it on condition of their individual choice. Thus all men are saved by Christ potentially, but only part of mankind actually. And whether a man shall belong to the one class or the other, is made to hinge upon his own volition. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." But there is nothing in it to coerce the moral liberty of the sinner. Christ came "to save the lost;" but not without his

consent. The God of mercy redeems him to a salvable state, yet requires him to accept or reject the overture, and thus to decide his own destiny. This is the import of a numerous class of Scriptures, of which a specimen is found in the rich and copious sentence listened to by Nicodemus: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This view of the Gospel plan anticipates and obviates the plea of Universalism, that all must be saved because Christ is the Saviour of all men. It is contended that what Christ came to do He did, or will do; and since He came to save all, He must necessarily be successful. We are told that if all are not saved His design is frustrated; that His effort is a partial failure; and that the devil proves stronger than the Redeemer. But all this is based on a misapprehension of the principles and method of redemption. Christ never intended His work to over-ride, that is, to annihilate, the moral nature of the objects of His compassion, by coercing their acceptance of His gracious offer. Independently of man's choice, Christ procured the boon, but bestows it only in harmony with his choice. Divine mercy never aimed at saving man despite his will to the contrary; and therefore there can be no failure in what was never attempted,—no defeat in respect to an object for which the Deliverer had never striven. His object was to offer salvation to all, and to confer it actually on all who would accept it; and that He will most assuredly fulfil, as He will "save to

the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him." Here again Universalism can only make out its case by assuming that the Redeemer will ignore or violate man's elective power, and by overlooking some of the essential conditions on which the Gospel makes personal entrance into heaven depend.

"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." So far from affording any disproof of eternal punishment this text rather confirms it; for it implies that there is death, though God has no pleasure in it; *i. e.*, there is punishment, notwithstanding God's love; showing there must be some other principle (justice) at work in His government besides mercy. If His love is sure to over-ride all else, it must over-ride this "death." But the context tells us it *does not*: "For his iniquity that he hath done shall he die;" notwithstanding the mercy which hath no pleasure therein.

True, the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should "come to repentance." But to conclude that therefore *none will* perish, would be in flat contradiction to fact; for we are informed, by the same authority, that *many do* perish. Men perish because it is so determined, not by the Lord's will, but their own. He is willing to save, but they are unwilling to be saved. In this sense the compassionate disposition of the Saviour is frustrated, but in no way derogatory to the sovereign sway of His Divinity, or the efficacy of His redeeming work.

A correct view of the Gospel plan further obviates the objection that man cannot justly endure the

penalty of his sin for ever, forasmuch as Christ his substitute has borne it for him. It is said it can never be inflicted twice over, first on Jesus, and then on the impenitent sinner. Here again the argument is oblivious of the moral liberty which the scheme of redemption makes so prominent. A principal part of redemption is restoration to moral excellence or holiness, which, from its very nature, must be voluntary. The seat of moral goodness is in the will. To overpower the will by sheer compulsion might restore the form, but not the reality of virtue. If not compelled absolutely, the continued perversity of will may prevent the work of Christ from effecting the actual salvation. The Redeemer laid down His life, not to save men willing or nilling,—not to preclude the possibility of wilful self-destruction,—not to supersede human liberty,—but to provide a heaven of holiness and bliss for all who would choose it. He is “a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;” not that God might restore sinners absolutely and unconditionally, but “that He might be just, and the justifier of *him which believeth* in Jesus.” All which is perfectly consistent with the infliction of the full penalty on those who reject the terms of deliverance.

Nor can we admit the assumption underlying the argument we are refuting, namely, that Christ endured punishment precisely equivalent to the desert of all human sin. It might be equivalent in merit to the demerit of all man's sin, without equality of positive

pain. His suffering was unutterable, unparalleled, to us inconceivable, and perfectly sufficient to make an atonement, in consideration of which the believing sinner might be pardoned and sanctified. But, as we hold, the merit of that offering was derived, not exclusively from the degree of suffering endured, but also from the union of that suffering with His Divine nature. As an act or a state of a man's body is ascribed to the whole person, body and soul together, so the sufferings of Christ, though endured in His humanity, were those of His one person, human and Divine, and thus acquired a value far transcending those of a merely finite being. In this appears part of the wisdom of the scheme, which, though involving Christ in an amazing depth of agony, involved less misery, on the whole, than otherwise might have fallen on humanity.

But whether the suffering were equivalent or not, Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all, on the distinctly avowed principle that the atonement thus made should not be a ground of pardon and restoration to those who voluntarily refused to avail themselves of it.

If eternal punishment be impossible because Christ endured sin's penalty, how are we to account for the tremendous curse of sin endured in this world, and that which Universalism deems terminable in the world to come? If eternal punishment after Christ has died be punishment twice over, so is all punishment, even the most limited. Strange that this plea against

eternal punishment is not seen to be a sword with two edges, equally decisive against a terminable and an interminable penalty : or rather, that it has no edge at all against either the one or the other.

2. The Gospel reveals no salvation for man, except through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." "Who gave Himself a ransom for all." "Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." By the "one sacrifice for sins for ever" Jesus opened "a new and living way" "into the holiest." And the consequence of rejecting that provision, as it will be pronounced at "the day approaching," is unmixed with any ray of hope. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me ; I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall

judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Can we infer less from these solemn words than that while the blood of Jesus is the only way of life available, even *that* way rejected through this stage of existence will not be available at the approaching day of judgment, nor subsequently to the surrender of the mediatorial kingdom into the hands of the Father? Christ's atonement refused, and the offer for ever withdrawn, it is impossible to imagine where help or hope is to come from, to those whose final state is likened to land bearing thorns and briars in return for the culture bestowed, and therefore "rejected and nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

3. Whatever the curse of sin may be, from which, according to the Gospel, we are delivered, as the deliverance is wrought by Christ, *the less that curse, and the less the importance of the Saviour's work.* If the curse be eternal, the virtue of the redemption from it far exceeds all human thought: if limited, whether to a few hours or millions of ages, the value of Christ's redeeming work dwindles into comparative insignificance. The difference between rescue from temporary and from everlasting evil is so great as to admit of no measurement. The one compared with the other is but a moderate benefaction—an ordinary boon, placing the recipients under an ordinary obligation, and unspeakably inferior to the importance attached in the Gospel to the escape effected for man by the Son of God. The Scriptures represent the work of Christ as the great central fact of the government of God over

man, the fullest and brightest manifestation of His perfections, procuring for man his richest and most enduring good. Assuming the evil from which Christ redeems to be of limited duration, how minished and feeble becomes such language as, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life!" "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ." "What is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Admitting for a moment that God's love might have been as great in itself as it now is, had Christ suffered and died only to redeem us from a temporary evil, even then the *worth* of the *boon* and our *indebtedness* could not have been so great: neither would the display of Divine love have been so great, had it with the same means accomplished only a smaller good. We do not desire the doctrine of endless suffering to be true in order to augment the value of the Son's mediation. But taking the facts, we are bound to believe the avowed importance of that mediation is inexplicable on the theory of universalism.

It might be replied, that the amazing importance of redemption consisted not so much in saving us from terminable ill, as in endowing us with eternal life. But that would not meet our argument; for the theory

of restoration is, that, apart from the atonement of Christ, the penalty of sin must come to an end, and be followed by eternal life ; according to which all that Christ did was to save those who believe from a limited period of suffering ; the difference between the saved and the lost being that the one class are saved by Christ at once, and the other will, without Christ, attain to holy bliss after the lapse of a time ; the latter reaching heaven by wading through hell, the former finding in Christ a shorter way. If this view be correct, Christ's work does not really procure eternal life, but only escape from limited evil. As, on the principles of Universalism, unbelievers will ultimately enter into life without Christ, the same lot must have fallen to the rest had they refused the Saviour : so that without Christ all would finally have attained glory everlasting. This logical conclusion from the theory of Universalism is so repugnant to the plainest and most exultant ascriptions of man's eternal life to the atoning death of the Son of God, that we can only hold to the Scriptures by utterly discarding it and the erroneous doctrine on which it rests.

We are aware that a few Universalists attribute the redemption of the wicked from hell to the mediation of Christ. But underlying that view is their doctrine of the "*impossibility*" of eternal punishment, especially on moral grounds. They declare it incompatible with the character of God : hence, whether Christ had interposed His merit or not, the wicked were not, and could not be, under obligation to suffer ; and from the same premises it follows that they could not be indebted to

Christ's redeeming work for escape from something to which they were never liable. Say that, but for Christ's work, the lost must have suffered for ever : then all the objections to endless suffering for sin, drawn ostensibly from the Divine perfections and government, are thereby given up. Say, on the other hand, that there are principles, natural or moral, in God or His dominion which preclude eternal suffering : then it follows that such suffering was never possible, and could not be incurred ; and if it was impossible, so was redemption from it ; and therefore deliverance from it could not be ascribed to Christ's mediation : for how could men be redeemed from a sentence neither justly due, nor capable of enforcement ? Thus, it appears, to mend the flaws of Universalism by extending the merit of Christ to the lost in hell, is only to create for it another dilemma, one horn of which implies that the redeemed are not indebted to Christ for escape from eternal punishment, and the other sweeps away all the paraded argumentation against an endless penalty as morally impossible. Universalism must either give up its *non potest*, or cease to ascribe to Christ the glory of redeeming from eternal death. The latter course contravenes the Scriptures ; the former chimes in with their clearest testimony.

On the theory of Annihilation it follows that Christ does not redeem His people from endless misery, but from extinction of being to eternal life, so that the ultimate difference between having Christ and not having Him is that between an endless bliss and no existence at all. This view would leave the value of

Christ's work intact relative to the positive good conferred on the actually redeemed ; but takes it away so far as it relates to their deliverance from everlasting evil. The weakness, however, of Annihilationism will be more appropriately exposed in a later part of this treatise.

4. If the punishment of the lost were not eternal, it would follow that Christ's work was *not essential* to the salvation of sinful men. Whatever the means or cause may be (other than the atonement of Christ) which can ultimately save the worst from moral and natural evil to endless good, it might have thus saved *all* the race. And hence, on the assumption of Universalism, the whole mediation of Christ might have been dispensed with, and yet every man of the race been brought to heaven. If that be the truth, then Christ undertook the wondrous work of grace, humbling Himself to the death of the cross, not to procure, but only to accelerate or antedate our entrance on eternal felicity. (For had He done nothing, we should, according to Universalism, have attained to it at a later period.) All that is then due to His redeeming grace is, escape from the evil which would otherwise have intervened between the present life and final restoration to perfect bliss. But if that be all, he speaks falsely who declares Christ "*the Author of eternal salvation* unto all them that obey Him." The just inference from Universalism is that the redeemed are indebted to Christ, not for unending blessedness, but for an earlier commencement of it, which is directly contrary to His own teaching : " I am the living bread

which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world." Are we to suppose Christ's work was *important*, but not *necessary* to man's ultimate well-being? That is the idea involved in the doctrine of universal restoration. And was the grand scheme of mediation by the Incarnate Word only of such worth? If so, Jesus must have overstated the bearing of His office when He claimed to be the exclusive medium of admission to the Divine presence: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." John must have erred in making the merit of His mediation the basis of all our future weal, by recording, "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." Compelled again to elect between Universalism and the inspired Word, we promptly decide for the oracles of God.

5. Interwoven with the Christian scheme is the doctrine that the present life is man's *sole* opportunity of escaping hell and securing heaven. To admit a probation after death would not disprove eternal punishment; inasmuch as some might be wicked enough to abuse any number of probations, and sink through them all to final ruin. But, admitting that this life includes all man's opportunities of avoiding perdition, it is impossible to imagine how those who have thrown them away can ever afterwards be restored: Unless we can suppose the all-wise God would so trifle

with Himself, His laws, and His subjects, as to nullify the effects of the dispensation under which He has placed man, the future world enfolds no chance, opportunity, privilege, or power, by which those who have persistently repudiated the overtures of this life's probation may subsequently reverse their doom.

If the Bible, while urging us so earnestly to seize the title to heaven ere the present state pass, were entirely *silent* as to any future possibility of obtaining deliverance, such silence would favour the inference that this is the only opportunity; for we cannot think God would conceal an element of His government, radically affecting the conditions of our happiness, and greatly denuding our present state of its supreme moment relative to our permanent state, reducing it to a comparatively unimportant stage of our existence.

But the Bible is *not* silent on the subject. In the parable of the talents, delivered in connection with the Lord's prophecy of future awards, the unprofitable servant abused his opportunity, and it was withdrawn with every indication of its never being restored. "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." To suppose the opportunity renewed would deprive the parable of its point, which is to induce men to lay hold on eternal life while there is a possibility. The parable implies, that with our

present probation end all means of attaining to the joy of our Lord.

Something of the same impossibility is taught in the other parable of the talents ; (Matt. xviii. ;) where the doom of a certain class of offenders is likened to that of the wicked servant, who, owing ten thousand talents, (£1,875,000,) and having nothing wherewith to pay, was delivered "to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto" his lord : which, if it mean anything, must involve perpetual imprisonment.

What less is taught by the fate of the five foolish virgins ? (Matt. xxv.) They might have been ready, and entered in with the Bridegroom ; but neglecting, "the door was shut," and, despite their cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," it was not reopened. Recollecting the close connection of this parable with our Lord's description of the general judgment, resulting in "life eternal" to the righteous, and "everlasting punishment" to the wicked, it would be but a shrivelled image of His thoughts to say the class intended by the foolish virgins were but temporarily excluded.

Accordant with the solemn lessons of these parables is the truth running through the account of Dives, (Luke xvi.,) who had already received his good things, and descended to a place where his prayers for help were offered in vain, and an impassable gulf separated him from bliss.*

* "The heaven we hear of in Scripture, and the hell we hear of in Scripture, are a heaven and hell depending upon our behaviour in this life. So they are all along spoken of. 'Indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish, upon every soul of man

The present probationary life is represented as the "*day*" which decides our entrance into rest, or utter exclusion from it. This life bears the relation to heaven which the sojourn in the wilderness bore to the rest in Canaan. As many Israelites, through unbelief, never entered the promised land, so shall unbelievers never enter the rest that remains for the people of God. It is this view which gives such pungent power to the writer's earnest exhortations: "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation." "And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it," or, as Moses Stuart after Theophylact renders it, "lest he may come short, and fail to enter into the promised rest." "Let us labour therefore to enter that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Heb. iii. and iv.)

Evidently the Christian plan provides *one* period of our existence in which we determine our endless state; a period which must issue in life or death for ever-

that *doeth evil*.' meaning, evidently, the evil done by him in this life; no other evil was in the Apostle's thoughts. Or again, more expressly, 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' 'The things done in the body' are the things taken into the account."—PALMY, Sermon xxxi.

more. And that period is this earthly life, with all its powers and gracious overtures. If, when God has revealed only one such day of probation, we may presume that, after it is lost, He will grant another, the same loss and presumption may be repeated a hundred or a hundred thousand times, and thus the motive power of each probation would be neutralized by reliance on a later one, till the last had actually slipped away, and the sinner was for ever unsaved. Were the great Ruler known to act on this principle of reserving latent opportunities beyond the declared terms of salvation, the stress now laid by His Word on the necessity of embracing the offers of this dispensation would be extremely out of proportion to the consequences suspended on man's compliance.

If it should be said, probations will be repeatedly granted as long as there are any unsaved, we reply, it is probable that, under such arrangement, some would sin endlessly from the knowledge at every stage that a further opening for escape remained; and so evil might continue for ever, because escape would never be foreclosed. Since the righteous Governor has offered no space for reconciliation with Himself except the present, which is emphatically "*called to-day*," we have not the slightest warrant to hope for any other. And if so, the dream of some after-opportunity by which hell may be emptied is as discordant with truth, as it is delusively deadly to those who venture to stake upon it their future well-being.

These passages exchange light and force with the closing sentences of the inspired volume: "He that is

unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly ; and My reward is with Me, to give every man as his work shall be."

Nowhere in the vast scheme of human redemption do we find any possible way out of the curse of sin, except during the momentous period of this probationary state. The doctrine of the perpetuity of suffering dovetails into the matchless manifestations of mercy so intimately, that to wrench it away is to separate in thought what in fact God hath immutably joined together.

But while we deduce our doctrine from the mediatorial scheme, our opponents profess to find in that very scheme some serious objections. Let us look at them.

1. There is a class of expressions in the Scriptures which contemplate the subjugation of all enemies as included in the consummation of the Redeemer's work. The following are among the most prominent. "For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." "Expecting till

His enemies be made His footstool." * From such Scriptures it is concluded that Christ's absolute purpose is to save lost men and angels. But premises and conclusions were never joined by a more imaginary link. It was foreign to the design of the Messiah to ransom the devil and his angels. Indeed, these very texts tell us as much. His object was not to save "the devil," but "destroy" him. It must be a wonderful ingenuity which can discover salvation for the enemies of Christ in their being made His *footstool*. That was the treatment received by the five kings of the Amorites at Makkedah, when Joshua said to his captains, "Put your feet upon the necks of these kings." But neither Joshua nor the captive kings took that to mean deliverance, or safety; for they were next slain and hung on five trees. When David sang of his enemies, "They are fallen under my feet," it never occurred to him that he was restoring or saving them. When he said, "Thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me," he had not the remotest idea of their rescue and exaltation. No more does the subjugation of the foes of Christ imply their rise, and reconciliation, and holy obedience. It is the triumph of His sovereign authority displayed in their final and complete overthrow and retribution. Good reason might be given why "every knee should bow," and "every tongue should confess," may be understood to relate not to all intelligent creatures throughout the universe, but only to those found in amity with God at the great

* 1 Cor. xv. 25; Phil. ii. 10, and iii. 21; Heb. ii. 14; Acts ii. 34.

day. But waiving whatever reply to the objection might be afforded by that narrower interpretation; there is nothing in the text, taken in its widest application, to involve universal restoration. For every knee to bow to the name of Jesus, and every tongue to confess Him Lord, does not necessarily mean to yield a loving and faithful allegiance. It may denote no more than a forced acknowledgment, by their complete and public subjection to His retributive power, of the victorious supremacy of Him against whom they warred. He justly demands a willing homage to His Divine Majesty from every intelligent creature, and where that is refused He will compel the involuntary homage of a vanquished rebel.

But such a victory is affirmed to be a defeat,—“Satan’s victory and God’s defeat.”* Assuming eternal punishment to be required by justice, it is no more a derogation from God’s perfections to say He must do right than to say He cannot annihilate Himself. To enforce such claims of justice displays His sovereign rectitude. If the endless continuance of moral or natural evil be a defeat of the Son of God, so was the *commencement* of evil, and so is the *existence* of evil *through the course of time*. But in reality neither is so. Natural evil may be regarded as the outgrowth of moral, which, from its nature, is not a thing to be overcome or extinguished by the mere fiat of Almighty power. If at the great day Christ were to conquer moral evil by coercive might, the same act would extinguish the moral nature of those in whom it took

* See p. 115.

place, which, apart from other considerations, would be a poor victory indeed. Is the majesty of law defeated, when it binds and punishes a notorious criminal, because it does not make him cordially loyal? Was Wellington defeated at Waterloo because he did not enforce love for himself in the hearts of Napoleon and his shattered army? Is the national government defeated when it brings a murderous traitor to the scaffold or life-long imprisonment? The spirit of objection must have run mad when it descends to the puerility of calling the penal subjugation of wicked men and fiends a defeat of the authority by which it is achieved.

2. It is contended that part of the avowed economy of the Gospel is to restore every fallen spirit, human or angelic, without exception, to a pure and blessed condition. In fancied support of this view the words of Peter are a favourite quotation: "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii. 21.)

There is, however, nothing in the phrase, "restitution of all things," beyond its superficial aspect, in favour of the Universalist. The utterance of the words, apart from the connection, may sound at first like an echo of his favourite theory; but, on inspection, the *sense* is against him. The subject of Peter's discourse is the development of the Christian dispensation,—the triumphs of the crucified in His own person, and in the effects of His truth and Spirit on

mankind,—“the time of the reformation.” He looks for “times of refreshing,” when men should find remission of sins on repentance.

The Universalist takes this text to predict the salvation of every human being, without exception, in the future world. A true exegesis refutes this exposition. The import of the restitution may be gathered from the prophecies concerning it. The subject of Peter's discourse is the prosperity of the Messiah's work in *this world*. “The times of restitution” were those of which God had “spoken” by the prophets. In the following verse Peter gives a specimen of the predictions referred to: “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you.” It is therefore fair to take the times pointed to by the prophecy, and the times of restitution, as the same. But Moses (Deut. xviii. 15–19) referred evidently to a period here in the course of time, and not in eternity. Christ, the promised Prophet, was to be raised up from their midst. He was to stand to the people in a relation similar to that occupied by Moses. He was to preach a Divine message to them. It would be their duty to hear; yet some might refuse to obey, and be “destroyed from among the people.” Whence it appears that the times of restitution were such as belonged to men in their temporal probation; all the predicted features of which synchronize exactly with the work of Christ in this current dispensation; but, applied to the future world, are egregious anachronisms. Alluding to the same

thought of times of restitution, Peter, in the twenty-fourth verse, calls them "these days," which identifies the restitution, not with a period after death or judgment, but with the evangelical dispensation which had already dawned upon the world, and in which the Redeemer was to achieve such glorious triumphs. A kindred phrase is, "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," which times, with respect to date and causation, are placed in contiguity with personal repentance and conversion. Understand "these days," "the times of refreshing," "the times of restitution," and the raising up of the Prophet like Moses, as referring to the future state, and the predictions of them, alluded to by Peter, *cannot be found* in Moses, or "all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after," nor anywhere in the Old Testament Scriptures. Understand him to refer to the proceedings of the period from Pentecost to the end of the world, and all is plain; prophecy and history blend their light to illumine the apostle's description of the Redeemer's work.

This interpretation is confirmed by the use of the verb elsewhere of which "restitution" is the noun. John the Baptist as Elias came to "restore all things," (Matt. xvii. 11, 12,) not by a forced restoration of lost souls from hell, but by preparing the way of the Lord in this world. Again, when Christ promised His disciples the baptism of the Holy Ghost "not many days hence," they asked Him if He would then "restore (*ἀποκαθιστάς*) the kingdom to Israel." He answered, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons

which the Father has put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts i. 6-8.) Although an explicit reply was not given to the question of the disciples, the conversation indicates that there was some similitude between the restoration of the kingdom and the outpouring of the Spirit accompanied with the dissemination of Christianity "unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Christ's promise led to their question, and was renewed in answer to their question, as if, according to His wont of passing from one application of a word to another, He would apprise them of a restitution of another and superior kind to be witnessed in the gift of His Spirit and spread of His cause. This similitude in Peter's mind, when the Spirit descended in such saving power, would account for his speaking of seasons of the world-wide prosperity of his Master's kingdom as times of restitution, (*χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως*), of which he then saw the earnest.

Our interpretation is further confirmed by Peter's allusion to the restitution as a fulfilment of the promise that in the seed of Abraham "shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Verse 25.) This was a blessing to be realized in *this world*; for it is declared repeatedly to be for the kindreds "*of the earth*." The third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians shows that the blessing was to be found in the justification of "the heathen through faith;" and that the recep-

tion of the blessing depended on individual faith; the promise by faith of Jesus Christ being "given to them that believe." In fact, the whole chapter makes it clear that the blessing through the seed of Abraham was for Jews and Gentiles, in the Christian dispensation, under the agency of "the Spirit through faith," and that it implies neither the restoration of any sinful souls in the future world, nor the universal salvation of all such souls in the present world. And this is the blessing, in Peter's mind, when he speaks of restitution.

Moreover, the word "times" does not correspond so well to the events in the future world of which there is any account in the Bible, as it does to those oft-repeated Pentecostal seasons of awakening and ingathering, which hold, and are destined to hold, so large a place in the history of the Christian dispensation. Should it be said, Christ will restore all mankind to bliss when He comes to judge the world; that would be diametrically opposite to His avowed purpose to come in order to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Should it be said, He will restore all at some later period; we have not the slightest intimation of it in the whole compass of revelation, but much positive assurance that it will not be done; for, "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The extent of the restitution is greatly affected by the foregoing considerations of its nature and period. As to "all things," the most sanguine Universalist cannot take the expression in its absolute or widest

conceivable sense. Probably he will deduct much unthinking matter, much of the animal kingdom, many dynasties, governments, and kingdoms that have passed into oblivion, and much of creation which shall not have fallen, and consequently cannot be restored. So with equal reason we are bound to limit the "all things" to those of the human race who do not reject the proffered boon. That some may reject it, is plain from the provision for the punishment of those who will not obey Christ. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." (Verse 23.)

To insist on the widest possible meaning of "all things," in order to secure proof of the restoration of every man, would carry the Universalist much too far for his own theory. There are myriads of things in creation which need no restoration, and having never deteriorated cannot be restored. They are as God made them, and therefore restitution applied to them is a misnomer. Hence, as there must be limitation somewhere, the question arises, *how far* the sense of "all things" is to be limited. If the Universalist has a right to narrow the sense into conformity with facts, we have an equal right to attach a limit agreeable to the context and the tenour of Scripture teaching. No expounder of God's Word would ever explain "all things" universally in such cases as, Charity "heareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." "All things are lawful unto me." "All things are become new." "Prove all things." "I have foretold you all things." As in these texts, so in the one under

discussion, it is the indefinite or general use of the phrase "all things," and in Peter's sermon is part of a description of the glorious conquests of Christianity over the world-wide darkness, perversity, and debasement of our fallen race.

When the Baptist as Elias came to "restore all things," his restitution did not comprehend all the men then living, nor even all the inhabitants of Palestine, much less every individual of the human species in the present, past, and future. Yet this is the import ascribed by Universalists to a similar phrase in the lips of Peter. In opposition to this inflated interpretation, having regard to the meaning of words, the context, and the analogy of faith, we conclude that, "the times of restitution of all things" includes the salvation of the multitudes who obey the Gospel ere the Son of Man shall come in His glory. Peter's mind is fixed on the period called "the dispensation of the fulness of times," in which God would "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth," that is, incorporate all saints celestial and terrestrial in vital union under the one headship of the God-man,*—the dispensation which the Baptist initiated,—in which, according to promise, the Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh, receiving its first great baptism at the feast of Pentecost,—over

* Others may prefer to understand by "all things in heaven and earth" the angelic and human happily joined under the reign of Christ; and others, the Church of Jews and Gentiles as one in Christ; either of which avoids Universalism. See Macknight on Eph. i. 10.

which Christ reigns, and will reign, till the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ,—and which He will terminate by His second advent, when He “will draw all men unto Him” for solemn final judgment,—in prophetic view of which, with its abounding grace for guilty men, the apostle urges their immediate surrender to the Prince of life.

It requires but little ingenuity to draw out imaginary analogies between the ultimate restoration of all the lost and the liberation of captives by the ancient jubilee, or the deliverance of a reduced family by its firstborn.* But such a work of fancy can serve in lieu of argument to those only who *desire* so to believe. Large as the provisions of the fiftieth year were, they

* *E. g.* Mr. Jukes thinks that as it devolved on the first-born of a Hebrew family to be “priest and king,” and “to redeem a brother who had waxen poor, and sold himself unto a stranger; to avenge his blood, to raise up seed to the dead, and to redeem the inheritance, if at any time it were lost or alienated;” so the last—the later born—are to be recovered by the instrumentality of those first saved,—the first born.—“The Restitution,” etc., pp. 32–38. This looks like framing a law out of the Mosaic one, to serve the writer’s purpose. According to the law of Moses, to deliver the poor enslaved brother was not the peculiar duty or privilege of the eldest brother. “One of his brethren,” his uncle, cousin, or any near kinsman, might do it. Or he might redeem himself. (Lev. xxv. 48, 49.) To raise up seed to his brother devolved on the younger brother, or next kinsman. (Gen. xxxviii. 7–8; Deut. xxv. 5–10.) If the law were as Mr. Jukes makes it appear, as a ground for his doctrine of restoration, it would afford but a sandy foundation. As it is, his argument is “a castle in the air.”

did not *compel* all to return to their lost liberty and inheritance. The jubilee, or "acceptable year," which Jesus came to introduce, the blessing of all kindreds of the earth by the seed of Abraham, the pentecostal outpouring, of which that at Jerusalem was the first-fruits, the baptism of "the Holy Ghost and of fire," the gladdening of the wilderness and the solitary place, belong, according to promise and to the redemptive scheme, to this "dispensation of the fulness of times," bounded by the two great advents of our Lord. To shift the day of these precious blessings forward into the fiery region of future perdition is a gratuitous violence to the Divine plan and prophecy. We readily grant that God may save the later born of Himself by the instrumentality of men earlier born. "And they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." But while their day of honour and reward is eternity, the season of sowing is the course of *time*, at the close of which "the harvest is the end of the world," when "the tares are gathered and burned in the fire." The period of probation and Christian toil over, and the destinies of "the children of the kingdom" and "the children of the wicked" fixed, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii.)

The above remarks on universality will apply with much the same force to the laudation of the Lamb by "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them." (Rev. v. 13.) Taken in its

most literal and comprehensive meaning, this passage contains not the slightest reference to creatures in hell. Nor can Universalism find a morsel of food in God's New Jerusalem declaration, "Behold, I make all things new;" (Rev. xxi. 5;) for immediately after He consigns several classes of offenders to "the lake of fire," "which is the second death."

Equally futile is the attempt to find universal restoration in what Paul writes of creation to the Romans: "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The word "creature" or "creation," here used four times, (Rom. viii. 19-22,) cannot literally include the universe, because a large proportion of it, as a matter of fact, does *not* "groan and travail in pain." Much of it is incapable of pain or pleasure, incapable of the *hope* and *sonship* ascribed to the creature. "The whole creation" is the same expression as Christ employed for mankind in all parts of the world when He said, "Preach the Gospel to *every creature*." (Mark xvi. 15.) If it has a limited meaning in the great commission of Christ, why not in the Epistle of Paul? Take "creature" to denote human nature, and "the whole creation" mankind at large; render "because" *that*; commence the twenty-first verse with "In hope that;" and treat the rest of the twentieth verse as a parenthesis: then it will intelligibly read, "For the earnest expectation of human nature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; (for humanity was made

subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected it;) in hope that the same humanity also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that all mankind groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Whether this particular interpretation be adopted, or one which comprehends the restoration of the animal kingdom and the material substance of the globe; for the reasons given above in reference to another passage, no amount of straining can logically extort a conclusion from it, involving the salvation of those men and angels who shall be condemned to everlasting destruction in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God.

To be "kings and priests unto God," or "a royal priesthood," does not denote, as has been suggested, the employment of the saved in the future world to recover the lost, but the high distinction of *all* the saved, as the whole nation of ancient Israel was "a kingdom of priests." So far as the future life is concerned, "kings and priests unto God" refers to honour rather than work. They are washed for the office in the blood of Christ; they offer themselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. But the idea of their interceding in heaven for the inmates of hell has no place in the Book of God, and is as much out of joint with its teaching as would be the idea that they will, after the Levitical fashion, succeed to the office by hereditary right, and hold it only for a few appointed years, or that they will subsist on the tithes presented by those who have perished. If the relationships of

men in the future world are to be regulated by imitation of the Levitical code, the Universalist is not at liberty to apply it as far as suits his purpose, and then stop. To be consistent, he must carry out the supposed analogy ; and, doing so, he will soon find himself in such a maze of solemn trifling as may well incline him to renounce the attempt altogether.

Many of the Christian fathers and mediæval schoolmen entertained an opinion, that while the body of Christ lay in the sepulchre, His soul descended to the region of the damned to offer salvation to some or all of them. It would have been superfluous to refer here to this opinion, held with various shades and modifications, but for its having been recently pressed into the service of Universalism. A *primâ facie* objection to it is its incongruity with the whole scheme of redemption, which contemplates the present life as the only period for choice or refusal of life through Christ. We are therefore not surprised to be unable to discover a single sentence from the first to the last page of revelation to sustain it. Indeed, had not some of the great patristic teachers broached it, and the creeds of some of the largest Churches been complicated with it, we doubt whether its modern advocates would have thought of finding it in the Scriptures. The passages on which it is supposed to rest are few, namely,—

1 Peter iii. 18-20. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit : by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison ; which sometime

were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." On inspection, we note that the Spirit by which He preached was not His human *soul*, but the Divine "Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead." (Rom. i. 4, and viii. 11.) Nor can it be fairly translated, "quickened in spirit," so as to denote His soul; for that needed no quickening: the soul continued to live. The antithesis to the death of the flesh is the quickening of the flesh. The quickening was of the body and by the Divinity. Hence there is nothing here to show that His soul descended into hell. It is not here said that He went to hell at all; but that He preached to the "spirits in prison," which may quite as well mean the spirits of the disobedient antediluvians, who were inmates of the infernal prison at the time Peter wrote. Further, it is not said that He preached salvation to them, though, from other places of Scripture, we believe he did during their *lifetime*. The persons to whom He preached were Noah's disobedient contemporaries. On the supposition of His preaching in hell, it were odd that He should only be named as preaching to them out of the many inhabitants of hell; but it is natural enough that they alone should be mentioned as His hearers, on the supposition of a reference to His preaching in the days of Noah, when once the longsuffering of God waited, while the ark was a preparing. So little does this passage express or imply the descent of Christ into hell to deliver any of its inhabitants, that some believers

in the descent, including Augustine and Calmet, have ceded the text as irrelevant to the question. Several interpretations have been given, each of which steers clear of the recovery of souls from perdition. The one which most commends itself to our judgment is that which understands the preaching to be that addressed through Noah to his living fellow-men, and accompanied by the convincing Spirit of God, and despite which their disobedience brought them down to "everlasting bonds." This view is strongly confirmed by the description of Noah as a "preacher of righteousness," and of the Spirit as "striving with" the antediluvians, but "not always."

Ephesians iv. 8-10. "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.)" Observe, there is here no mention of any visit by Christ to the place of the lost; for, "lower parts of the earth" neither expresses nor implies it. If the phrase must mean more than is meant by Joel and Peter in the phrase, "signs in the earth beneath," (Acts ii. 19,) *i. e.*, this lower world to which Christ descended from heaven, (John iii. 13,) it may refer to the womb, (as in Psalm cxxxix. 15,) or the grave (as in Psalm lxiii. 9). But, at any rate, there is neither warrant nor reason for referring it to hell. And as to His leading "captivity captive," which, like the name on His thigh and vesture, is a figure drawn from the

custom of conquerors leading their prisoners of war in chains, it took place at His *ascension*, and therefore would not synchronize with His descending into hell before His resurrection, which was at least forty days before. Besides, the idea of spirits led in servile captivity would ill suit the purpose of those who seek in this text the liberation and exaltation of lost souls. The design of Paul is to set forth the gracious gifts of the Saviour to His people on earth, procured by His humiliation to death, (by which He struck a death-blow at the devil and his works, spoiling principalities and powers,) and bestowed after His triumphant entry into heaven; displaying before saints and angels His victory over the enthraller of the human race. If the exposure of Satan's defeat (Col. ii. 15) was after Christ's resurrection, the work which procured the conquest was on the cross, "triumphing over them in it,"—that is, by the cross.

Acts ii. 27. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." This is the solitary passage on which Bishop Pearson rests the descent of Christ "into hell." But from this he does not find any intimation of restoration of the infernal inhabitants. The most he learns from it is, that the soul of Christ was in the place of departed souls during the entombment of His body. The words, however, may mean still less in that direction. As "hell" sometimes designates the grave, and "soul" the dead body,—(נֶפֶשׁ, *nush*; and ψυχή, *psyche*; Num. v. 2, and vi. 6; Lev. xix. 28, xxi. 1, 11, and xxii. 4,)—no more may be meant than

that He should not be left in death, but be delivered ere corruption could supervene; which precisely corresponds with the facts narrated, and with Peter's argument.

On any fair interpretation, these Scriptures refuse to yield any sanction to the theory under consideration. Nor can they be made to seem to do it, except by such a strange dislocation and jumbling of their terms as will not bear inspection. It may be added that this notion of Christ's liberating a multitude of souls from hell, if granted, would not suffice to prove universal restoration, unless it were shown that *all* would be liberated, and the infernal regions emptied to the last and lowest fallen spirit.

8. It is objected to eternal punishment that by consigning the far greatest portion of the human race to perdition, it reduces the achievements of Christ to comparative failure; inasmuch as the number of actual believers in Christ includes a mere remnant of the human family. If there were any force in this objection, it would tell equally against the theory of the annihilation of all the wicked. Without stopping to show that we have no right to deny a revealed truth because it happens to be discordant with our ideas of the proportion that ought to be saved in order to justify the undertaking; and without stopping to show that, so far as the scheme fails to confer life, it is due not to the Redeemer, but to those who "will not come unto Him that they might have life;" we proceed to challenge the *premiss*; namely, that our doctrine implies the ruin of all but a remnant of the race.

As the world goes on, one half die under the age of responsibility, of whose salvation we have every reason to be confident. In the most irreligious times, when piety, pure and undefiled, may have seemed almost extinct, there have probably been considerable numbers under the ban of heresy, or serving God in obscurity, who, in the day of reckoning, will appear among His jewels. Contemporary observers and ecclesiastical historians are quite as liable to underestimate the spiritual good in the world as was Elijah, who imagined himself the solitary worshipper of Jehovah, whereas God knew of seven thousand others. And as to the myriads whose earthly career is passed under the gross darkness of heathenism, Mohammedanism, or spurious Christianity; while it must be owned their ignorance, sin, misery, and peril, are deplorable enough to incite the yearning efforts of all Christian peoples for their enlightenment; and while, in point of fact, their natural or traditional light appears to be of little service, we cling to the hope that, as they were placed under the mediatorial government, a considerable proportion of them may, in some way, emerge into the light of Heaven's favour, and take rank on the right of the Judge.

Impatient curiosity, unreflecting enthusiasm, and narrowness of view, have often seemed eager to bring the world to an end. In almost every century since Paul had to disabuse the minds of the Thessalonians, men have expected the immediate close of the dispensation; and notwithstanding that the course of time rolled on, heedless of their hopes and fears, and

exposing their venturesome vagaries, their successors of our day seem to be none the less sanguine. It is easy to work an arithmetical sum, the elements of the calculation being given. But what is it worth in respect to future events, when so much diversity and uncertainty of opinion attach to those elements? It is no sin to be unable to decide how many years must elapse ere the Son of Man shall come in His glory. And it is more becoming to suspend judgment on a matter so non-essential to salvation, and as yet so enfolded in mystery, than to wring out of the signs of the times meagre and inconclusive explanations of unfulfilled prophecy.

Of the two theories, respectively, in favour of the proximate and remote termination of the current dispensation, we strongly lean to the latter. *First.* On the ground of Holy Scripture. The advocates of a speedy end generally take the prophetic days as years. Hence a prophetic year would mean three hundred and sixty Judaical years. Applying this principle to the thousand years of the Apocalypse when righteousness shall prevail over the earth, the Rev. Daniel Isaac says: "Understand them both (reign of Christ and of Antichrist) by the same rule of interpretation, and the duration of the age of righteousness will be three hundred and sixty thousand years." "But what a scene here opens to our view! Consider the myriads that will be translated to heaven during this happy period, and it will not excite surprise if the number of the lost of mankind will bear no greater proportion to the number of the saved, than the executions at Newgate do to

the inhabitants of the metropolis." * This opinion appears to be entitled to at least as much credence as the opposite one, which looks for a speedy consummation of the world's affairs.

Secondly. On the ground of the capability and resources of the globe for the maintenance of the human race in much larger numbers than have ever existed. If all the land on the surface of the earth were peopled as thickly as Europe now is, (about seventy *per square mile*,) the living family of man would amount to more than thirteen thousand millions, or about eleven and a half times the present population. A fair proportion must be deducted for barren and uninhabitable regions, (though Europe is not free from these,) and for famine, plague, war, and other checks to increase. But over against these drawbacks must be set the advancement of science and art, the increased productiveness of the soil, the development of the earth's material treasures, the probable increase of peaceful relations, and the much fuller knowledge and observance of hygienic laws. Balancing these checks and promotives, the above estimate of the future maximum population is brought within the bounds of probability. The number of the human family up to the present age has been computed at two hundred thousand millions. But in view of man's continuance for hundreds of thousands of years, and of the globe's capability of sustaining the present number several times multiplied, what are all the people that have lived compared with the number yet

* Works, vol. iii., p. 167.

to come? And how baseless any objection to endless punishment founded on the paucity of the saved! For, in the ages to come, we have reason to hope, the reign of sin in the world will diminish before the spreading, long-lasting glory of Messiah's kingdom.

Thirdly. On the ground of analogy we opine that the race is young. Perhaps every age is prone to estimate too highly the relative importance of its own events, just as the old astronomers imagined this earth the centre of the universe, and those greater orbs but little attendant lights, or as in a long row of equal pillars the nearest are apt to appear immense and the rest diminutive in proportion to their distance. Every age seems to have some men who fancy all the importance of the past and future centres in it. Hence, every year there are some to tell us the world is on the eve of its most stupendous events; and by their exaggeration they repel sober attention from really important signs of the times. In the amazing periods of time involved in the discoveries of astronomy, and the stretches of duration indicated by geology, in which years are counted by millions, and successive stages of being have been reached by immense cycles, there is enough to foster the opinion that the same God may extend the present order of things to a limit, compared with which the creation of Adam was but as yesterday. If God took five thousand years for the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, which, being introductory, may be regarded as the day-break, there is nothing unreasonable in expecting the current dispensation to endure until it

bear the proportion to the preceding stage which a full day does to its dawn. In that case we may look on this nineteenth century as quite in the morning of the day. Notwithstanding the rapid strides already made, science, art, agriculture, commerce, political economy, civilization, are only in their youth, and, we venture to think, so is Christianity; not like them indeed in having many of its fundamental principles to discover, but in having most of its time to live, its work to do, and its triumphs to win. In reference to time, as well as method, motive, and magnitude, God's "ways are not as our ways." Time has no limit to Him. He can afford to take thousands or hundreds of thousands of years, as easily as moments. And if we may pre-suppose Him likely to assign a vast period to any branch of His work, we may presume that nothing approaching to haste will be allowed to interfere with the objects of this gracious dispensation for the recovery of man.

Nor, *fourthly*, do we know of any inspired predictions at variance with this view. As to the twelve hundred and ninety years, and the two thousand three hundred years, it is not unlikely that the exact dates are "closed up and sealed to the time of the end." And the diversified explanations, partly arising from diverse starting-points of reckoning, can only at best be taken as conjectures. But, allowing the widest latitude of computation, it is sufficient for our purpose to recollect that all these fixed periods may be *anterior* to many of the greatest conquests of Christianity on earth. "Many are called; but few

are chosen," "Fear not, little flock," and, "Few there be that find it," must be understood in agreement with the parables of the mustard seed, the leaven, and the sower, and corresponding prophecies which image forth the world-wide prosperity of Messiah's kingdom through a long tract of time. These expressions cannot be taken as indicating the relative proportions of the saved and unsaved in all ages and in eternity. It was a little flock; but was to become a great one under one Shepherd. During the days of Jesus, and to this day, far too few seemed to enter the narrow way of holiness. While the invitation is to all, only too small a number have hitherto complied with the conditions of being "chosen." But in the future is a time when "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.....Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him." (Psalm lxxii.) In the whole course of His mediation He brings "many sons unto glory." While the strait gate shows the exclusion of all who refuse to be holy, the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem show that great multitudes shall find admission: "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." To assume that Christianity has reached its zenith, or won its greatest victories, is to ignore the "fulness of the Gentiles," figured by the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, becoming itself a mountain, and filling the whole earth. Such unfulfilled

predictions, as well as the general scope of the religion of Christ, well accord with the idea of many ages yet to come, in which its march of peaceful conquest shall have a length and breadth, of which all preceding triumphs are but the prelude, and of which the result shall be a vast majority of the human race translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.*

* "It is true, many angels fell, many, if you consider them abstractedly; but take them comparatively, and we have no reason to think but that they were a very small part of the host of heaven, in comparison with them that stood and retained their integrity.... You must consider the blessed society, the society of the blessed, a most numerous thing; the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of men made perfect; so that the angels that have fallen, and the apostate sons of men that shall not be recovered, and that finally persist in enmity against all the methods of reconciliation, though they will be numerous, yet a little, inconsiderable number they must be, in comparison of all those glorious creatures that inhabit the more noble parts of God's creation."—Howe, Sermon xxv. The same profound thinker says we have scope to conceive "the delinquents, compared with them," (the blessed,) "may be as despicable for their paucity, as they are detestable for their apostasy: and that the horrid *Hades*, wherein they are reserved to the blackness of darkness for ever, may be no more in proportion, nay, inexpressibly less, than some little rocky island, appointed as a place of punishment for criminals, in comparison of a flourishing, vast empire, fully peopled with industrious, rich, sober-minded, and happy inhabitants."—Howe, "Redeemer's Dominion," etc., 1838 edition, pp. 842 and 322.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUBJECT VIEWED IN RELATION TO HUMAN SYMPATHY.

*"Our sympathy can never be supposed to constitute an action
right or wrong."*—DR. ABERCROMBIE.

THE social instincts, intended by the Creator to stimulate the charitable efforts of men to save each other, are now-a-days wrought upon in order to excite rejection of a disagreeable truth. It is hard to regard this abuse as less than a culpable and pernicious perversion of a powerful instrument. This method is pursued in relation to sympathy, both as regards its operations in the present life, and its alleged operations in the life to come.

I. *In this life.* This is a favourite field with the opponents of the doctrine we maintain. The more they let themselves loose here, the more rhapsodical they become. Here especially is plied the *argumentum ad hominem*. Here rhetoric does duty for logic. Baffled on the field of Scripture, they fly to social feeling, which, once raised on any question, may easily incapacitate the mind for rational investigation. The effect is, that theology is tested not by appeal to the inspired Word, but, like some political measures, by the liking of the populace. The natural impulses are placed in array against the doctrine of endless suffer-

ing for sin; and where feeling is thus awakened, any amount of Scriptural evidence may fail to exert its legitimate influence on the understanding, although with some it will result in a state of mind wherein desire that the doctrine were false co-exists with an irresistible conviction that God's testimony proves it true.

The doctrine is charged with being "intolerable to the human heart," and with crushing out "all geniality, all bounding impulses, all magnanimous generousities." In the mental confusion thus produced it is sometimes argued as if some intuitive voice of *conscience* protested, when it is really all the voice of feeling. On this, as on other subjects, men find it convenient to attribute, with a virtuous air, to conscience what properly belongs to diseased emotion. A healthy conscience enlightened by the sacred Word must *agree* with that Word. Feeling of desire, preference, or liking may rise in opposition. A conscience warped, or ill trained, may pronounce against the doctrine. But to say this of a conscience in its normal state, and with the fullest light, is simply to beg the whole question. Conscience therefore must be relegated from this part of the discussion, which concerns the *emotions* and their bearing on the problem of the penalty of sin. The real point of the objection is, that the doctrine is at *variance* with the *sympathetic feelings* of humanity, and therefore *not likely to be true*.

1. In order to narrow the question, let it be borne in mind that some of these antagonistic feelings are

morbid, or have no right to weigh in the matter. *Mawkish sentimentalism*, in its unreasoning, unpractical, and intensely selfish whine, would veto all justice where it clashed with indulgence, and let the universe go to wreck under the pretext of love. The spirit of *rebellion*, which likes no law but its own will, would equally boil up against all penal suffering. Impatient of restraint, it would gladly chock the wheels of Divine government, and place vice and virtue on the same level. Blind *instinctive* aversion to pain would shrink from perpetual suffering, as the eye closes to a touch. Such feelings are fairly out of court. Their testimony is here incredible. It is not only against endless pain they cry out, but *all* pain, and all righteous retributive government. Unless we are prepared to have our beliefs ruled by our wishes, such emotions, instead of swaying our judgments on the treatment of sin, must be jealously denied all interference.

2. To test the doctrine by even the *purest* and *noblest* emotions of sympathy is to apply an *inappropriate standard*. It is no disparagement of Christian charity, to say it is not its province to decide on the duration or nature of punishment. The two things are so different that the attempt to find a rule in the one to determine the other lands us in bewilderment. Is the judge of a criminal court supposed to measure his sentence either by his charity to the culprit, or by the charity of the general public? He may be distressed by inward sympathy for him on whom he passes sentence, yet knows he must not allow that tenderness to prevent judgment. It were a preposterous transposi-

tion in judicial proceedings to let pity usurp the place of justice ; but doubly preposterous to let the province of God's justice be usurped by man's pity. That would be an incongruous standard applied by an incompetent judge—man's pity essaying the function of God's justice. If the penalty were left entirely to human benevolence, probably none would be enforced ; for it is not in the nature of benevolence to tend towards the infliction of pain. Where suffering is purely punitive, and not corrective to its subjects, benevolence can act no part in its administration. The understanding may perceive and assent to the righteousness and necessity of a painful award, while the emotions recoil therefrom. As the thermometer is not for the measurement of time, nor the chronometer for the measurement of heat, neither is mere benevolence, and especially man's benevolence, a standard to determine the desert of sin. The punishment of the lost meted out by charity is absurd, as would be the blessedness of saints in heaven meted out by just desert. We nowhere read in the oracles of God that He will deal out the doom of the wicked by the rule of human sympathy, much less that He will put each sentence to the vote of the assembled race. But we are forewarned that "He will judge the world in righteousness," without "respect of persons," rendering "to every man according to his deeds."

Moreover, if sympathy were to rule, it would not only forbid eternal suffering, but *all* suffering. It is its nature to dislike pain ; and if there were no other elements of government, it would waive all suffering.

The existence of mental and material pain proves that sympathetic emotion does not veto or control it; for, if it did, pain would be altogether excluded.

We are told belief in this doctrine makes sensitive and sympathetic people wretched. Quite as truly might they become wretched under the belief that murderers will be hanged, and thieves subjected to penal servitude for life; and that diseased limbs will be amputated, and that cancer is incurable. But such distress at the thought would not alter the fact.

“ Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.”

Who can think of all the horrors of a ship on fire, without escape for a single passenger; or a famine, slowly but relentlessly wasting millions of men, women, and children; or any great calamity, without being harrowed to the quick? But the calamities come, nevertheless. This is another instance where the objection to endless suffering breaks down because it would stand equally against temporary suffering. Whatever cogency it might seem to have against eternal misery, vanishes when the same method of reasoning is applied to *actual* misery. The difference is only in degree.

Admitting that feeling may often protest, its force against the truth of the doctrine does not depend on its fervour, so much as on its equity. The feelings of little brothers and sisters may glow with dislike to a child's punishment at the hands of the parent, without their knowing the reasons for which it is administered.

But such feeling would not prove the infliction unjust or unwise.

It is seldom the objection founded on sympathy assumes a logical form. It prefers to excite the feelings into revolt against the truth, and encourage the wish to become father of the belief. If it took the syllogistic form, perhaps its most feasible shape would be this : Whatever suffering in others is very painful for us to contemplate cannot be true : The eternal misery of the wicked is very painful for us to contemplate : Therefore the eternal misery of the wicked cannot be true. The fallacy of the major proposition is apparent. Facts contradict it. Not to speak of limited suffering in hell, which could not be true if this syllogism were sound, are not the groaning widespread miseries of this mortal life so painful to contemplate, that incessant thought upon them might well reduce a cheerful mind to melancholy ? But to infer thence their impossibility would be the denial of a truth which is already a palpable fact, and would be enough to excite suspicion of insanity. And if, as this proves, the major proposition is false, so is all the objection based upon it.

The objection is sometimes put as if belief in the doctrine *made* it true, and is accompanied by the insinuation that its believers are wanting in benevolence ; whereas they believe it *because it is true*, and they will bear comparison for good-will with those who disbelieve it. The accusation that its believers “ gloat over ” the idea of hell’s torment is a gross libel, warranted neither by the natural tendency of the belief, nor by the beha-

viour of such believers. A medical man, a prison philanthropist, or a Missionary to the wretched dregs of society, brought into daily contact with suffering, is not necessarily less benevolent or less sympathizing than the simpering sentimentalist environed from the view of his neighbour's calamities. Nor is there anything in the belief of eternal punishment as a revealed truth to chill benevolence, or to retard its efforts as far as they can be available in behalf of the needy. Tried by the test of history, the philanthropy of believers loses nothing by comparison with that of persons who repudiate the doctrine. Were John Howe, Alleine, Baxter, Chalmers, Wesley, Whitefield, Lady Huntingdon, Jonathan Edwards, Dr. R. W. Hamilton, John Fletcher, and an innumerable company of such men, inferior in tender sympathy, in self-denying effort to raise the fallen, and to restrain the wayward from the path of ruin? Are the bulk of sincere adherents of the doctrine less attentive than others to the temporal and eternal wants of their fellow-men, or less earnest and laborious to bring all the world into the arms of the Redeemer? If history and current events are any guide, we trow not. They have been numerously prominent among the most self-sacrificing Missionaries abroad, and the purest benefactors at home. We have known a fair proportion of the deniers of eternal punishment, some of whom have commanded respect by their talents and character. But with every wish to render what is due, we are bound to confess we have never seen among them either the superiority of intellect or the extraordinary goodness of heart which

are ascribed to them by their novel-writers. Within the range of our observation their real characters are far inferior to their fictitious.

The inconsistency of our accusers is most unfair. If we are solemnized by the stupendous import of the doctrine, they charge us with gloomy despair. If we are cheerful in the contemplation of happier themes, they charge us with insincerity of belief, or indifference to the woes and perils of our race. Only a "small proportion" of those who profess to hold the doctrine are credited with sincerity; "and accordingly the world is to them robed in a sable shroud," and their countenances wear "the perpetual livery of mourning, despair, and misanthropy." The rest are but "fancied believers," who "live as chirpingly as if heaven were sure for everybody." This style of attack betrays confusion of ideas, and, alas, we are obliged to add, an *animus* which imparts to the loud boasts of magnanimity and philanthropy with which it is accompanied, a strong odour of cant. We have no desire to conceal the fact that too many who profess to hold the doctrine, give little or no evidence of its practical effect on their concern or activity. But the same may be affirmed of almost all great religious truths. How many there are, including believers in long but limited punishment, who would subscribe to the authoritative teaching of the Bible, and seem to behave as if their creed never touched their character! Yet to adduce that in proof of the falsity of their creed would be an attempt to build a superstructure without a base.

We as readily admit that the doctrine is at present

a *painful* one to contemplate. We cannot but be sorrowful at the thought of even one human being thus for ever banished because he will not come unto Christ for life; and our sorrow and anxiety are deepened again and again by the thought of so many friends and neighbours who appear bent on the same self-destruction. Times without number has it woke up within us the eager inquiry, How may our exertions be increased to lessen the human streams flowing down to perdition? We confess, this view has sometimes cast a sombre cloud over the earthly delights of irreligious friends, and rekindled ardent desire to see their earthly joy, not extinguished, but underlaid with the saving grace of God. It is childish captious in our opponents to expect hope or joy to spring up at the thought of fellow-men consigned to endless ruin, or to argue against the doctrine because it does not give pleasure. Is the Universalist gladdened to think of the unnumbered ages of agony through which, on his theory, so many of his species must pass ere they emerge into rest? Can the Destructionist rejoice at the prospect of myriads in pain for millions of years or for hundreds, to be ended only by loss of existence? Why then complain of the doctrine of an endless penalty because the prospect saddens in proportion as it is dwelt upon? Is nothing true and right but what we can at present rejoice in? Firm believers in the doctrine have generally been among the happiest people in the world. But they never professed to derive their bliss from the idea of eternal misery in their fellow-beings. It was chiefly from the con-

temptation of the glorious triumphs of redemption in themselves and all who would accept the glad tidings of great joy for all people.

There is enough to distress us, to wring our social sensibilities, and to rouse all our energies for the rescue of men pacing down to destruction. It might be well if this awful truth were allowed more play on our hearts, and then our yearning compassion to souls might prompt far greater efforts to "pull them out of the fire." Whether in some future condition a broader view may discover in the arrangement a bearing on other parts of God's universal reign, which will afford some sort of gratification to charity, we cannot tell. At present, to be unable to glory in the suffering portrayed by the doctrine no more disproves its truth than our regretting the truth of human misery in this world disproves the doctrine of human depravity. If either involved any derogation from the character of God, it might be so. But the temporal suffering of this world and the perpetual suffering of the world to come are due to man's abuse of his freedom; and neither the one nor the other implies the smallest speck on the name of the Most High.

Belief of the doctrine does not require incessant concentration of attention on the subject. Others may have a claim. And our mental health needs to be nourished by others, as the bodily eye needs to dwell on the green beauty of nature, and the ear to listen to melody and harmony. The privations, vices, and anguish of the present, absorbing the powers of one mind constantly and exclusively, might derange its

healthy balance, and weigh it down to intense agony and delirium. If one man made it his sole business to search out and dwell on the horrors of war, famine, storm, disease, destitution, bereavement, disappointment, blighted hopes, remorse, vice, and crime, which afflict mankind, ere he had thought through their millionth part, the light of his own soul would probably expire, and his own deep melancholy or madness might supply an addition to the world's wailing and woe. It is doubtful if any finite mind is strong enough for the burden. At all events, it would overcome one of tender sympathies. Were the actual evils of this state of being to monopolize human thought and feeling, there could not be a bright home, or a cheerful soul, in the world. Happily neither our duty to God nor to men necessitates the experiment, either in relation to the ills of the present or the future. God has provided wholesome change for the mind,—light as well as darkness; summer as well as winter; themes of redeeming power, wisdom, and love; of pardon, sanctification, heavenly peace, and fulness of joy; communion with Himself and with saints; holy work and holy triumph,—as counteractives to the helpless sadness arising from the thought of souls hopelessly undone. To cheer the mind by meditation on these happy themes is no more a proof of misanthropy than is our turning frequently away from the crimes and sorrows of the human family to the brighter aspects of our world. And the former act no more invalidates the doctrine of eternal punishment, than the latter invalidates the truth of present human wretchedness.

Mercy to our feelings appears also in the ignorance which enwraps our minds as to the precise destiny of deceased individuals. We can understand and reiterate the terms of salvation to all who hear the Gospel, and we may reasonably feel assured of the safety of many whose moral symptoms comport with our ideas of a Christian state. But, as to others, our ignorance of their complicated mental operations, and of the hidden workings of grace through life, and in their closing hours or moments, forbids our forming a judgment of their doom. Probably the great day will reverse many of the opinions, not to say judgments, we formed of the persons who should stand respectively on the right and left of the Judge.

As to those who charge us with insincerity, because the effect of our belief is not perpetual melancholy or madness, it is difficult to argue with them. They attribute to us dishonest or deluded conduct, as professing to believe what we do not believe. They represent us as belying our own thoughts. They refuse our statement respecting our own convictions. Possibly, had they the power of Mohammed, or the earlier Popes, they would compel us to profess a faith, as they think, more accordant with our mental state. If such be the charity produced by their negative belief, our doctrine need not fear comparison on the question of moral tendency. If our asseveration *had* any meaning to them, we would solemnly assure them that, as we honestly search the word of God, and would humbly accept its teaching according to our best judgment, we have no alternative but to endorse the doctrine of

unending punishment as one of the plain truths unfolded by Revelation. Whether we might be assigned a place among the "small proportion" of misanthropes who sincerely hold the dogma, or among the many who "delude themselves with the mere fancy and image of a belief," so far as we know ourselves, we hold the doctrine with intelligent seriousness, and without any detriment to our Christian sympathies. If there be persons whose faith is insincere or inoperative, the doctrine professed is not responsible for that evil, and is not thereby proved the less true.

It is in accord with the objection we have been combating that eternal punishment is opposed by an outcry for a "generous theology;" the latent assumption being that generous impulses in man have a right to modify or relax the punishments dictated by the revealed righteousness of God. Faith in God's predicted judgments is condemned as narrow-hearted; and bold repudiators of the penal side of God's government are lauded as men of large hearts, broad views, and noble sympathies. Of course, schools of theology, like religious sects, can choose their own names, though it be a perversion of words from their ordinary meaning; and thus the most unwarrantable attempts to denude the Bible of its warnings, and Divine government of its just authority, and hell of its severity, may be called magnanimity and generosity; but all, except superficial thinkers, will perceive it is not a change of the truth or the thing, but only a mal-appropriation of names. As the persistent self-assertion of its "catholicity" by the Church of Rome

may mislead some minds, while the intelligent remember the reality bears no correspondence to the name, so the grandiloquent names with which latitudinarianism bedizens itself, though delusive to the weak, to more vigorous inquirers carry no conviction, but rather awaken suspicion of bombast.

The germ out of which comes the large-souled dislike to endless suffering, legitimately developed, would sweep away all disagreeable results of sin. It would ennoble the rescue of the vilest criminal from the grasp of penal law. Applied to the dealings of the moral Governor with the guilty in a future world, it is, however, a generosity as cheap as it is pretentious. Like a man who is generous with his master's money, or lets loose the king's prisoners without authority, it relaxes what God has not relaxed, opens the gates of hell for the exit of its inmates without the warrant of the universal Lord, scatters "indulgences" without His sanction, and holds out hopes to the guilty, which, if realized, would be at the cost of God's truth. From the denial of endless punishment because distasteful to the feelings of fellow men, it is not a great step to its denial because opposed to the feelings of the culprit himself. Many of the exciting appeals to social sympathies to rise against the punishment God has fixed and declared are like appeals addressed to the relatives of a condemned criminal, in order, first, to wring them with anguish, and then to rouse them against the justice and execution of the law; except that in the former cases the wrong is more aggravated, as they instigate antagonism to the government of God.

Throughout this part of the subject it will be obvious that our object has not been to prove the doctrine of unending suffering true from the charitable sympathies of our present Christian state ; but to *defend* it against the allegation that those sympathies prove it untrue. From what has been adduced, it appears to us there is nothing in the doctrine antagonistic to the purest and fullest charity ; and nothing in the tenderest, broadest, noblest sympathies of the Christian heart incompatible with a fixed and intelligent belief in God's appointment of irremediable ruin for the finally impenitent.

II. *In the life hereafter.*

Still on the defensive, let us turn from the feelings of mortals to the argument said to be derivable from the sympathies of celestial beings. If the doctrine we maintain be proved contradictory of the unalloyed bliss of the heaven of heavens, our position must be reconsidered ; while the failure of that proof will add silent countenance to our view. Were it possible for an objection to gain force by temerity of statement, such advantage would belong to the assertion, that " it is a fatal objection to the doctrine in question that if it be true it must destroy the happiness of the saved, and fill all heaven with sympathetic woe." Asks the writer of this sentence, "*Could the saved be happy and passive in heaven when the muffled shrieks of their brethren, faint from the distance, fell on their ears ?*" "*Could the angels be contented when they contemplated the far-off lurid orb, and knew the agonies that fed its*

conscious conflagration?" "*Could Christ be satisfied?*"* This language is a fair specimen of the special pleading on that side of the question,—impassioned appeal in lieu of argument; heathenish and grossly material imagery filling up the description where Scripture is silent; half angry, half suppliant addresses to the feelings, urging them to condemn and forbid a certain future state on the ground of conditions of which we are as yet profoundly ignorant. If such men as *Thomas Aquinas* have gone to one extreme by describing the saved as deriving one of their glories from beholding the torments of the damned, the opposite extreme is reached by those who paint the celestial hosts as bending over the bottomless pit, and frantically refusing to taste the joy of heaven until the last and lowest fallen spirit be lifted *volens volens* to the realms of bliss. And here, as usual, the extremes meet in drawing upon imagination for scenes which Revelation refuses to supply. Let the extravagances of orthodoxy and heterodoxy pass for what they are worth, while we address ourselves to the core of the objection raised.

We fully admit—yea, we rejoice in—the truth of heaven's incorruptible happiness. "There can in no wise enter therein anything that defileth." "Nor any evil." Christian hope looks beyond this vale of tears to the consummation of present sonship to God in the fulness of joy in His presence and pleasures for evermore at His right hand, when all who now receive Him "shall be like Him," and "see Him as He is." But the argument against endless suffering, ostensibly

* *Alger's "Future Life,"* pp. 549, 550.

grounded on the perfect happiness of heaven, is as fallacious to those who deny its assumptions as it is plausible to others who make it a mere matter of fancy and feeling. Stripped of its glowing rhetoric, the objection is, that the idea of endless punishment cannot be true, because, if it were, it would mar the happiness of heaven. To this reasoning we reply,—

1. It rests on the *assumption* that the minds of saints in heaven will be affected by the condition of the lost in the same painful manner as they are in this mortal probation. It cannot be disputed that the celestial state of men must involve a great mental transmutation. Religion changes the character here ; but the social and sentient qualities remain much the same, until elevation to heaven shall require their adaptation to a state of unmixed and permanent felicity. Remembering that this is a state of mortality, probation, suffering, and preparation by social intermixture of the righteous and the wicked, and that heaven will be a blissful immortality, where all will be holy, the change from this to that must necessarily be immense and manifold. How the material body can be made immortal, how disembodied souls can have intercommunication, how they can associate with angels, how they can behold the face of the Omnipresent Jehovah, are among the questions about as difficult to answer as how such social and sympathetic beings as we are on earth can ever cease to be miserable at the thought of the lost. Just as some think this impossible, others cannot bear

the idea that their present happy *conjugal* relations shall not be renewed and perpetuated in heaven. Yet Christ assures us that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage: and His doctrine seems to be necessitated by social complications such as those submitted to Him by the Jews. As at present constituted, recollection of former sins will often produce *painful* regret or shame in a forgiven and devout man. But we do not expect that pain to be realized in heaven. One of the most vehement opponents* of everlasting punishment admits that in the future our affinities will be changed. Then how does he know that our sympathies will not? It may be well to consider whether, if our feelings are there as here, heaven's bliss may not be marred to some extent, either on the theory of restoration or annihilation of the wicked, by *recollection of past evil*. Suppose the heavenly company to retain, after actual evil was no more, a vivid, comprehensive retrospect of the widespread, long-enduring havoc caused by sin, despoiling so much of God's fairest handiwork, blighting so many of His sensitive creatures with heart-piercing bitterness, would the remembrance cast no shadow over their perfect jubilation unless an important change came over the laws of feeling to which they are now subject? And if there will be change in this respect, there may be in respect to the effect produced by contemporary suffering for sin. It is therefore no departure from analogy and no stretch of credulity to

* Alger, p. 572.

believe such change shall take place in the sympathetic properties of the saved, or in the power of external influences over them, as shall prevent the distress of which it is the means in this earlier and lower stage of being.

This view is further favoured by the fact that sympathy, though deeply inwrought with our present experience, is not an *essential* part of the man. That is to say, he might retain his identity without it. It is an accidental, though common, development of original susceptibilities. Strictly speaking, a susceptibility (*e. g.*, of love or gladness, etc.) is an essential part of the constitution with which the Creator has endowed man: while sympathy, which feels the joys or sorrows of others, is regarded as the result of suggestion. Dr. Payne says, "It is not, however, certain that sympathy in the general feelings of others, is the result of a distinct susceptibility of mind. It may be possible, perhaps, to trace all its phenomena to another law of the mind. Even Dr. Brown, who maintains, though with some hesitation, that the mind possesses an original tendency to sympathy, admits that many of its phenomena may be traced to suggestion....." "that the sight of any of the symbols of internal feeling should recall to us the feeling itself." * According to this theory the celestial conditions of existence may the more easily obviate the pain which sympathy causes now, without any constitutional change of the mental nature.

* "Elements of Mental and Moral Science," p. 264.

This will appear the more probable, if we follow those moral philosophers who hold that sympathy is *not love*, though the two may be often intimately blended. The most sympathetic are not always the most benevolent. A person may become less sympathetic, yet more generous. If sympathy with suffering were itself goodness, or in proportion to goodness, God must be the most wretched being in existence : for He is the most loving. Clearly moral excellence and happiness are separable from painful sympathy. Dr. Payne writes, "Sympathy does not at all depend on love. It should not be spoken of as an emotion which arises out of it,—a statement which Dr. Brown, with singular self-inconsistency, has made ; for, almost in the next sentence he tells us, 'that there is often sympathy where there is no love, but positive abhorrence !' How then can it arise from love ?" * It is then no derogation from the goodness of the ransomed hosts to suppose their condition will be so altered as to prevent the painful effects they experienced on earth from the perdition of the rebellious.

The probability of this opinion is further increased when we consider that, while in this probationary state, such action on our sympathies is evidently intended to rouse our energies to recover, not the irretrievably lost, but our neighbours and friends *on the way* to ruin : whereas no such purpose could be answered where all are safe and happy. God may have reasons beyond our perception, but this would

* Payne, p. 266.

be reason sufficient to explain why certain painful excitements may now be brought into play, which will cease when they become not only utterly useless, but contrary to the perfection of the promised reward.

Taking sympathy as the result of suggestion, its power is generally in proportion to the closeness of association. Distant and unfamiliar objects are often unable to excite it, while proximate ones of far less intrinsic moment inject their sorrows and joys into our hearts. Thus a suffering person may come within the range of our sympathy, or pass beyond it. Indeed, as it is impossible for any one man to enter into the sufferings of more than a few of his fellow-men, the great bulk must be beyond the range of his sympathy. Sympathy with every individual of mankind is a very nominal sort of emotion. Most of the sorrows of the race are beyond the circle of each man's feeling. For aught we know, the lost may somehow pass beyond the range of sympathy to celestial beings. By distance, by absence of association, by pre-occupancy of attention, or by other means, God may render the wretchedness of the wicked innocuous to the citizens of the everlasting kingdom. Possibly the vastly broader and deeper view of the whole subject which heaven will afford may neutralize the painful effect. Who knows what indignation at sin a thousand times keener insight into its evil may kindle? or how the principles of the Divine government, displayed in the sunlight of God's presence, may modify the emotions

relative to obstinate violators of law? Sympathy with the suffering is checked or destroyed by being resented on the part of its objects, and by their continuing to cherish the sin which engenders the suffering; nor is it in our power to assert that painful sympathy may not be thus prevented in the future world. We cannot attribute either a heartless stoicism or a marred bliss to Abraham, or Lazarus in his bosom; and yet co-existent with their "good things" were the evil things endured by Dives. According to the principle assumed by the objection we are rebutting, they ought to have agonized or become frantic till he was delivered and borne across the gulf. Where was the law of sympathy which refuses to tolerate unending retribution? Evidently our Lord's teaching conjoins with facts to show that the position taken against the doctrine is untenable.

It is in no degree incumbent on us to show *how* unalloyed enjoyment, notwithstanding the state of the banished, will be accomplished. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." We take the two truths of endless misery in hell and endless happiness in heaven, both revealed by the all-wise God, and thence justly conclude that He must have some method of bringing both to pass, whether any of the methods we have suggested be adopted or not.* The objector's mode of

* "The blest in a future life will no doubt have their powers of thought enlarged, so as to be able to understand, even *without* an express revelation, many things that 'pass man's understanding' in this life, and perhaps much that could not

reasoning is, that the law of sympathy will operate between heaven and hell, and therefore there must be some way of restoring all the infernal spirits. Our mode is, that the eternity of punishment is revealed as well as the perfect happiness of heaven, and therefore there must be some way of modifying that law in harmony with this revealed truth, which is a sufficient answer to the objection. Whether the doctrine of eternal punishment, or the notion that sympathy will operate just the same on the saved in heaven as on earth, is best supported by credible evidence, it is easy for a believer in the holy book to perceive. What has been said may suffice to show that no mortal is capable of arguing from his terrestrial feelings to his celestial, and thence to the impossibility of ceaseless pain. To say he is sure he would be miserable in heaven as long as any were for ever excluded is a *groundless* assurance, unsupported by reason or Scripture. He pronounces on a case not yet cognizable to him, and in the teeth of inferences derivable from ascertained truth.

2. Testing the objection by the *reductio ad absurdum*, it melts like snow before the fire. If painful sympathy be the necessary result in celestial minds of the knowledge of endless suffering, the same effect must ensue on the supposition that the misery is limited. Hence the objection, if it had any force, would be by no means peculiar to the case in dispute. On the same principle as runs through the objection, the sufferings of the lost

even be revealed to us, with our present faculties."—ARCHBISHOP WHATELY, "Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State," p. 226.

for, say, millions of years must alloy the happiness of saints and angels, and of God Himself, until the period of restoration or annihilation. The angels, principalities, and powers must have been in a state of distress ever since their fellows fell from "their first estate" into "everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." How the angels could descend to sing joyful songs over the earth; and how they can fill the courts on high with Alleluiahs, while there is so much anguish among the devil and his angels; or how heaven can be a place of blessedness, while myriads of men on earth reel and groan under their cumbrous weight of natural and moral evil; and how there can be holy joy anywhere in the hearts of those who know there is sorrow or pain somewhere in the same universe, are problems which the Universalist with the above theory of sympathy is totally unable to solve. The objection to the evils of earth and hell for a *limited* duration may be couched in almost the very same language as that employed against eternal evil. Thus, the sufferings of men through the long course of time, and for perhaps millions of ages in hell, "must destroy the happiness of the saved, and fill all heaven with sympathetic woe." "*Could the saved be happy and passive in heaven when the muffled shrieks of their brethren—faint from the distance—fell on their ears?*" "*Could the angels be contented when they contemplated the far-off lurid orb, and knew the agonies that fed its conscious conflagration?*" Had not facts too fully demonstrated the enormity of real and positive suffering, the Universalist's notion of sympathy might have

led him to insist on its impossibility. As it is, the facts completely overturn the theory by which he hoped to overturn the doctrine of everlasting punishment. If the saints in glory can be perfectly happy while so many are suffering through a limited number of ages, the same power which shields the beatified from suffering thereby can do the same through eternity. If God can be perfectly happy while sin and suffering exist and abound, it is reasonable to believe He can make His saints and angels happy also, without detriment to any single virtue. And if He can do it for a year or millions of years, He may do it for ever.

It might be replied that hope of the evils ending at any future period would alter the case of God and His holy creatures. But the difference would only be in *degree*. All that could be said on the Universalist's theory of sympathy is, that the distress of saints, and angels, and God, would be lessened by that hope, but not removed.

The more these objections based on feeling are analyzed, the less of argument they seem to contain. Traced down to their root, they appear as the *dicta* of lawless, and often selfish, impulse, assuming the airs of transcendent benevolence, and denying the righteous Lord the sovereignty of His own empire.

It is chiefly in connection with the subject of this chapter that the doctrine we defend is charged with promoting infidelity. Having cut away the ground from under the feet of this charge, so far as it originates in sympathetic feeling, we may add that on *no ground whatever* can the charge be substantiated. We do not

stop to show that rejection of this doctrine *is* infidelity ; for we take the charge to mean that it tends to induce unbelief of *other* doctrines of Christianity. The fact that belief in this truth has been for centuries, and is now with the great majority of professed Christians, associated with adherence to the leading truths of the New Testament, rebuts the accusation. Nor has the doctrine any *intrinsic* tendency to scepticism. Believers in it acknowledge the supremacy of the Word of God, where many of its opponents set up other standards. They subordinate human feeling and credence to the authority of the Bible, where opponents invert that order. The legitimate bearing of faith in the doctrine, and the history of belief, teach that infidelity gets its countenance and its cue elsewhere, and not unfrequently from rejection of this revealed truth. Hitherto the attempt to incorporate scepticism on this subject with a creed evangelical in other respects has always failed. And the present attempt of a few to repudiate this doctrine, and yet retain the rest of their orthodoxy, is too incongruous and anomalous to succeed. Despite their disclaimer of the term, it is an attempt to engraft a branch of rationalism on the stock of Calvinism. The school they represent must descend lower still, or retrace their steps. It may be that infidelity is sometimes encouraged by the inconsistency, or apparent insincerity, of avowed adherents of our view. But the doctrine itself is not responsible for that ; just as any other Scriptural doctrine is not responsible for the same deplorable effect when its professed belief is inoperative, and merely nominal. Let the parents of a family

subscribe to the clearest truths of redemption, yet behave as if their sole object were to enjoy the world, and it will be wonderful if their children do not turn out sceptics or indifferents. But, then, who would ever dream of charging the blame on the redemptive scheme ? or of inferring thence the untruthfulness of its doctrines ?

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER EXAMINATION OF ALTERNATIVE THEORIES—ANNIHILATION—UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

"Men think that death is the end of their troubles, whereas it is only the beginning of them. It is the lot of the wicked that they live in death, and suffer as it were continual death."—
PHILO, quoted by R. WATSON.

MEN who have any faith at all in Christianity, yet reject its teaching of endless punishment, generally betake themselves to one of two positions; namely, belief in the *universal restoration* of all fallen spirits to eternal life, or a theory of *annihilation* of the incorrigibly bad, or one of *destruction*, almost identical with, or difficult to distinguish from, annihilation. The nearer the eye of criticism approaches these alternatives, the more defenceless they appear. It becomes more and more difficult to conceive how they could be resorted to, except as subterfuges from unwelcome truth.

I. *Annihilation*.* The theory of annihilation is, that

* On this subject our observations may seem to go twice over the same ground. This arises from the distinction set up between loss of existence and loss of conscious existence; the one denoting absolute annihilation, the other something short of it. Sometimes the phraseology and drift of Destructionists seem to imply the former, and again the latter. We have, therefore,

the impenitent and unsaved will, at some future period, have a termination of their sins and pains by a termination of their very being,—their conscious nature becoming an utter nonentity. It is a tenet never very prevalent in Christendom, but of late years made prominent, and asserted with all the enthusiasm of men who think they have hit upon a valuable discovery. Let us examine it under the inspiration of a supreme desire to find, not what is most agreeable to our wishes, but what commends itself to our intelligence as bearing the stamp of truth.

1. Looked at in the light of Divine government as displayed in the current order of things, annihilation strikes us as highly improbable, because *the analogy of nature is against it*. In the whole field of observation there is no instance of annihilation in the strict sense of the word. The advocates of the theory seem to confound an entity with its temporary or accidental condition. The thing continues after a particular state of it has ceased ; for example, a piece of matter called a tree is consumed by fire, and, in popular language, is said to be destroyed. It is destroyed as a tree, but not as matter. Whether carried off in fume, or left in ashes, every ultimate atom of which the tree consisted is as really existent as before, though in a different state. All physical science proceeds on the principle that, with all the infinitude of changes throughout the

dealt with the subject first on the one hypothesis, and then on the other. But where a point under the second branch has been sufficiently referred to under the first, it has not been deemed needful to re-introduce it under the second.

universe, no portion of matter is reduced to nonentity. Agreeably to this, the change of the human body, called "death," is not the annihilation of a single particle of which it is composed, but only a change in its relative state. It is a change of condition, not annihilation of its entity; the termination not of being, but of a particular *mode* of being.

Nor is there a single phenomenon in natural death to indicate the annihilation of that spiritual entity we call "the soul." That it no longer manifests its existence through a material organization is no proof whatever of its nonentity. Our inability to trace its continued existence no more proves non-existence than our inability to trace the subsequent course of some of the subtler portions of the dead body proves *their* non-existence. Our ignorance of its immortality affords not the slightest ground for inferring its mortality. The inference should be rather in the opposite direction; for, admitting the soul's present existence, it is fair to assume, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that, notwithstanding great modifications, there is no cessation of being.

If the case of the soul at death is analogous to that of the body, the spiritual substance* thus separated from its material organism must undergo most important alteration in its state or mode of existence; but there is no annihilation of the *nature* of which the soul consists. It may suddenly drop down to a state

* *Substance* not in the popular sense, but the metaphysical, to denote that which can subsist independently of any other created being, whether matter or spirit.

of dense darkness and intense misery ; or it may spring up into light and liberty compared with which its embodied state was imprisonment. Death may be to it another birth, an introduction to an entirely new set of conditions, a fall into the bottomless pit, or a flight to heaven, a crisis, a metamorphosis, but no cessation of being. As the material substance, though buried from sight, or driven to creation's utmost bounds, remains a part of creation, so the immaterial substance, though passing beyond the cognizance of surviving mortals, does not pass out of God's spiritual domain. Deaths, revolutions, catastrophes, may whirl in endless cycles, yet for aught nature tells us,—

“ The unconquered mind looks down upon the wreck,
And, ever stronger as the storms advance,
Firm through the closing ruin holds its way.”

Perhaps the annihilationist might here remark that as a tree may cease to be a tree, or a human body a physiological structure, while not ceasing to exist as matter, so may the soul cease to be a soul. But this refuge would fail him. For, whatever it ceased to be, if it remained at all, there would be no true annihilation ; and if it be analogous to the body, *something* must remain. Call it soul, spirit, substance, or anything else, as long as there was being, under whatever name or in whatever state, it would fall short of annihilation.

To say the soul shall cease after the manner of the body's organization, but not of its substantive materials, is a spurious analogy, set up between the *state* of one thing and the *entity* of another : that is, between the

entity of the soul and the state of the body. The disorganization of the body is an *ideal*, the cessation of the soul a *real*, annihilation. The one dissolves the elements, the other destroys them, the one modifies created things, the other uncreates. This is a distinction so great as to deprive the attempted analogy of all force and plausibility. The only analogy which can affect the question is that which compares being with being, or state with state; according to which the legitimate inference is that mind is no more annihilated than matter.

The notion of the *natural mortality* of the soul is imported into this controversy as a weight in the scale of absolute cessation of being. This, to be of any use to annihilationism, must mean either that there is some power or principle in the soul which sooner or later will terminate its existence, or that according to the order and plan by which God rules nature (*i. e.*, natural law) the soul will be brought to nothing by His will and power. For mortality ascribed to the soul in a sense corresponding to the mortality of the body would not, as we have already pointed out, denote deprivation of being, but only of some particular state. Mortality of body means that its present construction, functions, and animation will cease, while its material essence will continue. The soul mortal in that sense would only be subject to loss of its present state of being, not the being itself. Only in that meaning does the light of nature allow mortality to be applied to the soul.

As to annihilation by the tendency of inherent

qualities, none have yet been discovered. Nor are mental phenomena likely to discover them. The probability is the other way. The apparent enfeeblement of intellectual faculties under the infirmities of age is probably but the result of physical decay obstructing the free action of the soul, until it be liberated from its mysterious connection with the grosser nature. The full vigour of other minds at the period of dissolution forbids the notion that the powers of the mind die away with those of the body. Both cases together seem to favour the deduction that mind, disentangled from a frail mortal habitation, enters on a fuller development of its attributes. But, apart from this, we repeat that if dissolution were the loss of certain qualities to the soul, that would not be the loss of existence.

If mortality mean a natural tendency to non-existence, there is not a single real thing in creation to which we can ascribe it. We never understand subjection of animated bodies to death to be a subjection to annihilation of any particle of matter. Then why speak of the mortality of the soul as a tendency to annihilation of its very essence, while mortality of the body is only a tendency to a certain change in its non-essential properties? The phrase, "natural mortality of the soul," is ambiguous, and consequently liable to mislead. Employed in a sense analogous to "the natural mortality of the body," it can have no bearing on the question of annihilation, and is therefore worse than useless. Employed in a totally different sense, as denoting the soul's inherent and necessary

approach to nonentity, it insinuates a false analogy, and predicates of the soul what a true analogy condemns. Should the phrase be intended in a yet different sense, to signify that the soul could not subsist without the immediate support of the Almighty's power, not to remark on the novelty and inutility of the phrase thus applied, it may suffice to reply that the same sort of mortality belongs to every part of creation, but in no way implies that anything shall cease to be. For if that truth (or truism) involved the annihilation of any one thing, it would equally involve the annihilation of all the created universe.

Respecting the destruction of the soul by the will and power of God, nature gives not the slightest intimation of it; and, as far as God's will can be read by His present method of government, the foregoing observations show its improbability.

More unlikely still appears the soul's utter extinction, when its *superiority* of nature is considered. If there be no sign of an absolute end of a single atom of matter, how much less may we expect the literal annihilation of a spirit whose nature is so much more nearly akin to that of the immortal King! Defilement of character may entail loss of happiness, but does not destroy the spirituality of its essence. And for God to extinguish its being would be a greater undoing of His former work, and therefore a less likely thing to occur, than to extinguish the essence of unthinking matter.

The above reasoning takes for granted the soul's immateriality as subsisting distinctly from, and inde-

pendently of, the body. Should the Annihilationist deny this premiss, and assert the soul to be only material, resolving all thinking, feeling, and willing into mere matter and its properties, his position would be none the less indefensible. For, if man consists of no substance but matter, however peculiarly combined and organized, the event we call "death" would be the destruction of all men, the virtuous and vicious, religious and irreligious, *both alike*. But that would be fatal to the theory of those who endeavour to engraft Annihilationism on Christianity; their theory being, that only the wicked are put out of existence, and the righteous continued for ever. On the basis of materialism, death would put a period to all that is human in both.

Our conclusion is, that nature, consulted on the question of the literal annihilation of human souls, wicked or otherwise, utters not a syllable in its favour, but a considerable testimony on the other side.

2. Still less countenance does Annihilationism find in *holy Scripture*. To gain the semblance of support it has to put new and unwarrantable meanings on Scriptural phraseology. It fondly harps on "destruction," "the second death," "immortality," and "life in Christ" only. Looking at these expressions in their respective places, we shall discover how different is their import from the teaching sought to be wrung from them. Of such passages the following are about the best samples.

(a.) *Destruction*. Matthew vii. 18, 14: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction,

(ἀπώλειαν,) and many there be which go in thereat : because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The assumption is, that the narrow way leads to continued existence, and the broad to annihilation. But mere *existence* is a doubtful boon ; for it may be happy or wretched, and altogether unworthy of the earnest effort which Christ advises in order to the attainment of life. He evidently intended by "life," not only being, but the highest *well-being*, as He did when He called Himself the bread from heaven to give "life unto the world." (John vi. 33.) The life He gives is more than existence, which may be possessed where the life is wanting ; for John says, "He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life ;" yet the persons who were without the life had existence,—proving the distinction between the two. The "life" to be found by the narrow way is the contrast to the "destruction" at the end of the broad way. But the opposite to life is, not non-existence, but sin and misery. The opposite to annihilation is mere existence. Annihilationism implies that the "life" and "destruction" are entity and nonentity. We maintain that "life" denotes a holy and blessed state, and "destruction" a state of sin and wretchedness ; and this accords with the drift and earnest spirit of our Lord.

Matthew x. 28 : "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to destroy (ἀπολέσαι) both soul and body in hell." If to destroy the soul in hell meant to

annihilate its very nature or essence, then, by parity of reasoning, to destroy the body must mean, not simply the destruction of its form and animation, but of its very essence or ultimate atoms, an issue of which neither reason nor Scripture gives us any hint. There is a comparison of ability to inflict suffering, and a design to show how much greater is God's ability to punish than man's. But His ability to punish is much less if it only reaches to extinction of being than if it extends to the infliction of positive pain for ever; for the latter is allowed to be an infinitely greater penalty than the former. There is also a comparison between man's act of killing the body—*i. e.*, taking away the animal life—and God's act of destroying body and soul in hell. In this there must be points of likeness and unlikeness. A point of likeness is in the *permanence* of the matter of which the body consists, while its particular structure and animal functions cease, and the *permanence* of the spirit or soul, while whatever of enjoyment or comfort it had is terminated. A point of unlikeness is the *smallness* of the former calamity (destruction of body) measured by the latter (destruction of both in hell). The words of Christ point to a destruction far more to be dreaded than cessation of being; one of miserable rejection and banishment for incorrigible rebellion against the King of kings.

Acts xiii. 40, 41. "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish (*ἀφαισθήτε*): for I work a work in your days, a work

which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Whether the reference of Paul be to Isaiah (xxix. 14) or to Habakkuk, (i. 5,) there is nothing in either of the three passages, or in their contexts, to imply annihilation of either matter or spirit. All that is said by Paul and the tenor of Bible teaching contains no sanction of such a thought. The perdition threatened against the despisers, for aught the expression signifies, is not a mere negation of being, but conscious being under positive calamity.

Rom. ix. 22. "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" (*ἀπόλειαν*.) Nothing less than gratuitous assertion can make "destruction" here tantamount to annihilation. The objects of mercy are represented by the earthen vessel put to honourable use, and the objects of wrath by the vessel in meaner rank, or at worst rejected and broken. But, whether put to dishonourable use or broken, there is no destruction of the material *substance*. So the destruction of the objects of wrath, represented by a degraded vessel, is not of their entity, but of their happiness.

2 Peter iii. 7. "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition (*ἀπωλείας*) of ungodly men." This text must be read with its context, from which it will appear nothing short of unauthorized dogmatism to say it teaches annihilation. The perdition of the ungodly is

referred to in the ninth verse: "The Lord is.....not willing that any should *perish*, but that all should come to repentance." To ascertain whether this perdition of the ungodly means the loss of being, or of *well-being*, consult the sixth verse, where the same word is applied to the material world under the deluge: "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, *perished*." Unless we are to understand the globe to have been, not merely devastated, but literally annihilated by the flood, we cannot consistently suppose annihilation to be intended by "perdition of ungodly men." Derivatives of the same word are employed in the same sentence to describe both destructions, and in a way which makes one a premonition of the other.

Psalm cxlv. 20. "The Lord preserveth them that love Him, but the wicked will He destroy." If "destroy" means to put out of existence, "preserveth" must mean to keep in existence. But that might be a blessing or a curse according to the *state* of existence. Then were the promise not particularly precious to God's children, as it would contain no guarantee of blessedness. Surely the Psalmist must mean that God preserveth the "righteousness, peace, and joy" of them that love Him: and, if so, the antithesis requires the opposite, namely, deprivation of all good, to be intended by the destruction He will bring upon the wicked.

The same word (שמד) is applied to the overthrow of a nation, a family, a lineage, a multitude, high places, and the women of Benjamin; but never to the

annihilation of either matter or mind.* When, therefore, this expression of David is seized upon to bear witness to that notion, we naturally look for some inherent or contextual feature requiring such peculiar interpretation. Yet the closest inspection discovers none; leaving us to understand the word here as elsewhere to denote extinction, not of being, but of blessing.

It often happens that when a word is admitted on all sides to have a given sense in other places of the Bible, the same sense may be claimed for it in a particular passage, unless there be other reasons to preclude it. For instance, as "God" generally denotes proper Divinity, we attach that idea to the word in the address to the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (Heb. i. 8.) So if there were Scriptures in which destruction indisputably signified extinction of the very essence of things, it would be a *primâ facie* case for considering if the same meaning might not belong to those Scriptures which denounce destruction on the ungodly. But even *that* support fails the Annihilationist. For, we deny that any single instance occurs where destruction must mean reduction of a real being to nonentity. Many passages threaten destruction to the wicked; but not one of them is so phrased or connected as to necessitate the idea of absolute annihilation.

* See Deut. iv. 26, vii. 23, ix. 8; Psalm cvi. 34; 2 Kings xxi. 9; Amos ii. 9; Joshua xiv. 11; Isaiah xiv. 23; Dan. vii. 26; Lev. xxvi. 30; 1 Sam. xxiv. 21; Prov. xiv. 11; Ezek. xxxii. 12; Judges xxi. 16.

Several words rendered "destruction," when compared with their use in other parts of Scripture, are found to import injury, calamity, loss, ruin, degradation, or deepest humiliation, which are all possible without utter annihilation, and require positive existence for their endurance. Tracing the several words which in the Old Testament are sometimes rendered "destruction," we find them respectively applied to the consumption of Sodom, which could not mean the annihilation of its materials, the calamities of Job while still living, the corrupt and degraded state of the people, the overthrow of one nation by another, the loss of an eye, the marring of a girdle, natural death, the breaking down of altars, houses, and walls, the devouring or swallowing up of food, of the magicians' rods, and of Korah and his company, the weakness and terror of poverty, the punishment of evil workers, dread, injury, etc.*

So as to the expressions used in the New Testament where destruction is spoken of, we find nothing to imply annihilation. The common verb is ἀπολλυμι, and the noun ἀπόλεια; for whose various forms we have in the authorized version such terms as "destroy," "perish," "perdition," "destruction," and "lost."

* See Gen. xix. 13; Job xix. 10; Gen. vi. 11, 12; Exod. xxxii. 7; Deut. ix. 12; Mal. ii. 8; Exod. xxi. 26; 2 Kings xix. 12; Jer. xiii. 7; Judges vi. 30; Exod. xxxiv. 13; Isaiah xxii. 10; Jer. xxxix. 8; Job xx. 18; Psalm lii. 4, 5; Jer. li. 34; Exod. vii. 12; Psalm cvi. 17; Prov. x. 15, xxi. 15, xviii. 7; Isaiah liv. 14; Psalm lxxxix. 40; Jer. xvii. 17, etc., in such words as Nathats, Baley, M'chittah, Shamad, Schachath, Charam, etc.

We have endeavoured to show that the texts chiefly quoted in favour of annihilation, taken with the context, will not yield that result. Comparing them with the general use of the same word, the proofs of annihilation become still more shadowy.* Sometimes *natural death* is intended, as when the scribes sought to "destroy" Jesus. Again, it denotes *loss of goods, great privations, and suffering*. Who would ever imagine the piece of silver and the one hundredth sheep temporarily "lost" were during that time out of existence? or that Christ, wishing the fragments of bread to be gathered up, lest they should be "lost," had any idea of annihilation? or that the prodigal "lost" in the far country was literally a nonentity? Yet they and the fate of the wicked are described by different forms of the same word. When Jesus said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost," He described the state of men in *this* life by a word which often describes the state of the unsaved in the world to come. But who ever dreamed that the loss or perdition He came to save men from was nonentity? Many of the very men thus "lost" were then living and acting around Him. Clearly to be lost is not to become literally nothing, but to be greatly debased; the loss in the future world being a continuation and aggravation of that from which Christ would save men in time. The unclean spirit, assuming him to be very wretched, might have been expected to court annihilation as an

* See Luke xvii. 27-29, xix. 47; Matt. xxvii. 20; Luke xi. 51, xx. 16; John xviii. 14; 1 Cor. x. 10; Luke xv. 17-24, xix. 10; Matt. xviii. 11; Mark i. 24.

end of his suffering. But destruction was something he dreaded, and must therefore have been in his view rather an increase of his misery than an end of his being; for he cried out, "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to *destroy* us?" *

More important still is it to inquire how the word is used in relation to the *future* world. It occurs in the third of John: (John iii. 15, 16 :) "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Understand perdition as synonymous with annihilation, and Christ is then made to say He saves men, not from the miseries consequent on sin, nor from any positive suffering whatever; but only from the negative evil of ceasing to exist. How much feebler then becomes the contrast between eternal life and perdition! How much less does Christ seem to achieve for us! How the richest, fullest, grandest sentence in the Bible, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," is cramped and minished! And how the rapturous praise of the Lamb, in earth and heaven, is robbed of its sublime and glorious motive! Paul says, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish

* It is vain for the advocates of annihilation to arrange the uses of the word into two classes, one referring to annihilation, and the other to something less. For, besides the arbitrariness of the arrangement to serve a purpose, there is nothing in the context to need or to consist with such a classification. The same radical notion pervades them, namely, ill-conditioned being.

without law ;” and if we look at the context for his idea of that punishment, we learn that he is speaking of a real, conscious, sentient existence, under a doom to be pronounced at the day of judgment,—“indignation and wrath, *tribulation* and *anguish*, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.”

A less frequent term for destruction is that which occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews : (ii. 14, *καταργέω* :) “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death He might *destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” It would require an extremely far-fetched and strained exegesis to make this passage teach that the death of Christ put an end to Satan’s very being. His destruction, as here set forth, is prior to the deliverance of men, and posterior to the death of Christ. The death of Jesus is the cause ; the deliverance of men from bondage was the object to be effected ; and the destruction of the devil a means to that end. We gather elsewhere that he will appear at the great judgment. And if he is not yet destroyed, and will not be before the end of the world, the death of Christ cannot effect the deliverance of men till after that period. But the deliverance has already taken place : Christ’s people have been delivered from the enslaving fear of death by His death and resurrection, (2 Tim. i. 9, 10,) and therefore the destruction has already taken place, and so cannot mean the annihila-

tion of its subject, who still exists, but his humiliating defeat as the arch enemy of mankind. In the Epistle to the Romans, (iii. 31,) its sense is to make void or frustrate: "Do we then *make void* the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." And it bears a kindred meaning in the third verse of the same chapter: "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief *make* the faith of God *without effect*?" So in the expression, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be *destroyed*." (Rom. vi. 6.) In the Epistle to the Ephesians (ii. 15) it is translated "abolished," in the sense of repealing laws. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 24) it denotes "subjugation." These references may serve further to rebut the notion that in the second of Hebrews it implies the annihilation of the devil.

Another word (*δολος*) occurs in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians: (i. 9:) "Who shall be punished with everlasting *destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." This passage is decisive against utter extinction, *First*, because it declares the doom of the disobedient a state of *punishment*, which supposes a sentient nature to endure it, whereas non-existence is in itself no punishment; for where there is no being to be punished, no punishment can be inflicted. *Secondly*, because the nature of the destruction is explained as consisting in exclusion, not from the universe, but from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; which exactly accords with the doctrine of endless pain.

Thirdly, because "everlasting," as it teaches perpetuity of punishment, presupposes perpetuity of being. If the punishment were not everlasting, neither could the destruction be so. The one is the form or mode of the other; that is, the everlasting destruction is the form of the punishment. A thing cannot be less enduring than its mode or form. The duration of the banishment is affirmed to be endless, which could not be if existence ceased. *Fourthly*, because the destruction is the infliction of righteous "vengeance," or retribution. But to annihilate is no real infliction; for there is no being who can feel it. To a nonentity, justice and injustice, pleasure and pain, are all alike; that is, they are nothing. The only way in which it could be an infliction is in the *prospect* of it. But to one already suffering acutely for sin, as the wicked in hell are supposed to do, the prospect of losing an existence so fraught with misery would be rather a relief than a punishment; in which case, annihilation could not be called a punishment either before or after the fact.

Paul adjudges that the fornicator at Corinth (1 Cor. v. 5) be delivered "unto Satan for the destruction (*ὀλεθρον*) of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." It is irrelevant to our purpose to show whether the delivery meant expulsion from the Church in order to bring about the probing and curing of his sinful carnality, or the subjection of his body to wasting Satanic power for the ultimate recovery of his soul. From neither sense of destruction can the utmost ingenuity wring the least intimation of the annihilation of any real substance.

Paul, (1 Tim. vi. 9,) employs two words, (*δλεθρος* and *ἀπώλεια*.) said to be from the same root, except that the latter has an intensifying prefix. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in *destruction and perdition*." There is nothing in the meaning of the words, or the context, to suggest annihilation. It is something more to be feared. The simile of men *drowned* in a calamity is suggestive of continued entity, though overwhelmed with privation and sorrow; while the double and cumulative form, "*destruction and perdition*," intensifies our idea of the curse entailed by sin.

Other places, where there is nothing to determine the sense of the word on this subject, need not be cited. The import of the texts already consulted, where destruction evidently represents actual suffering, may fairly warrant us in interpreting in the same sense other texts which contain nothing to show their bearing on this particular question.

(*b.*) *Second death.* Annihilationism must be hard beset when it seeks support in the apocalyptic phrase, "second death." It occurs four times. (Rev. ii. 11; xx. 6; xx. 14; xxi. 8.) It is said to have been a common Jewish phrase for the future punishment of the wicked. Christ says, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." But annihilation would not hurt miserable offenders. Therefore they must remain in being to endure the hurt. It is to be cast into the lake of fire. "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." "The lake

which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." But we read of some who were "cast *alive* into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," (Rev. xix. 20,) and that the devil was "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were, and shall be *tormented* day and night for ever and ever. (xx. 10.) Hence, as there can be no torment without existence, the second death cannot be a deprivation of being. Moreover, the second death is the award of the great Judge to men not written in the Book of Life, "*according to their works.*" But if it consisted in annihilation, there would be no distinction between the greater and lesser criminals.* All would receive alike; which would *not* be "according to their works:" whereas, taking the second death to be a condition of ceaseless suffering, the *degree* thereof may be varied according to the varied degrees of guilt in its subjects. This, by the way, is an answer also to the plea raised alike by Destructionists and Universalists, that "few stripes" and "many stripes" are incompatible with ceaseless pain. Surely different degrees may be meted out by intensity as easily as by duration. Nor is there anything in the expression, "second death," to imply or even suggest annihilation. As the first or natural death does not terminate either

* This point would not be obviated by replying that the difference might be made by different lengths of suffering antecedent to the annihilation,—the end coming at different periods according to the degrees of guilt. For the punishment, under the name of the second death, according to this theory, is not the antecedent suffering, whether long or short, but the *annihilation*; which *in itself* would be the same to all whenever it took place.

the material or the immaterial part of man, neither does the second or deeper death. In the words of Dr. Adam Clarke, "The *first death* consisted in the separation of the soul from the body for a season ; the second death in the separation of body and soul from God for ever. The first death is that from which there may be a resurrection ; the second death is that from which there can be no recovery. By the first, the *body* is *destroyed during time* ; by the second, *body and soul* are destroyed through *eternity*." Thus the sentence of the second death not only withholds all countenance from the theory of annihilation, but is in several points directly opposed to it.

(c.) *Life in Christ only.* Apparently some of the advocates of an absolute end to the unsaved delight most of all to dwell on the theme of *Life in Christ only* ; from which they draw the inference, that all ultimately found out of Christ will cease to be. It is their Goshen in which they love to luxuriate. It affords ample scope for lauding Christ and the potency of His work, and wears the aspect of evangelism. Their jubilation, however, far exceeds their logic. We have no fault to find with their extolling the Redeemer ; but we emphatically deny their inference. The pith of their argument is that men can only have eternal life in Christ, and therefore all who do not become savingly united to Him will drop out of being.

We more than admit, we long to impress on mankind, that life eternal comes to man only by Christ, "who is our life," and in whom our life is hid. We have "life through Him" "who died for us, that,

whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him ;" " the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." Christ is " the resurrection and the life." " He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." We " shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." " This is the true God and eternal life," who will give every faithful follower " to eat of the tree of life," and who proclaims, " I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

But *what* is the life ? Mere existence ? or a holy and blessed state ? If the former, the argument is good to prove that of all mankind only those shall continue in being for ever who die in Christ. If life here means the latter, all the argumentation from it to the future nonentity of the ungodly is the veriest waste of words, at which the love of truth may well grow indignant.

Let us inquire into the nature of that life, which is a distinct question from those of its duration and circumstances. Its duration is expressed by eternity ; its ultimate objective circumstances are denoted by the various names for heaven as a locality. Its nature is expressed by " life." It is a subjective experience *in* the man.

It may be, to an extent, realized on this side dissolution. For, Paul says, " I live, yet not I, but Christ

liveth in me ; ” “ The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *hath made* me free from the law of sin and death.” And Jesus said, “ Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood *hath* eternal life.”

One element of this life is *freedom from guilt*. Accordingly the Saviour declares the believer “ *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” Agreeably to which Paul adds, “ As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

Another essential element is *love to God*. Jesus taught that to keep God’s commands was to “ enter into life,” and that the two great commandments are love to God and our neighbour. “ This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” And, “ He that loveth not knoweth not God.”

It is to be under the purifying and felicitating influence of the Spirit of Christ. “ For to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

Manifestly the death from which Christ redeems is not non-existence, but a certain conscious, sentient, moral state ; and the life in Christ is not existence, but humanity restored to holy and blissful union with God. *Eternal* life is this for ever continued and expanded in the inheritance of the saints in light.

How weak to contend that the only alternative to this life-state is non-existence ! It would be as reason-

able to contend that the unbelievers of our Lord's day were at the same time non-existent because they had not the life which He offered them. They had being without Christian life, as too many have now, proving the life was not existence, but a *state* of existence. The one is the effect of His work as Creator; the other of His work as Redeemer. Hence the relation of creature to Creator remains, when that of redeemed to Redeemer ceases or is rejected. The life eternal in Christ is begun on earth and consummated in heaven; the second or eternal death is the perpetuation of the Christless state, chosen and commenced in time. Christ did not die to restore man to existence, but to life. The departed souls of the wicked have not Christian life while awaiting the judgment; yet most Annihilationists would hesitate to affirm that they have no being; showing there may be loss of life without loss of existence. Understand "life" to mean existence, and "perdition" to mean non-existence in the third chapter of John, and we should read, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not cease to be, but should have everlasting existence." Could bathos be more complete?

(d.) *Immortality*. Tracing the words "incorruptibility" (*ἀθαρσία*) and "immortality" (*ἀφθαρσία*) as used in Holy Writ, annihilation appears foreign to revealed truth. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 42, 53, 54) both words are applied to the resurrection body. But the opposite to that immortality and incorruptibility of the body is subjection to decay and death, which is

not annihilation. The superiority of the resurrection body over this mortal one is not in the absence of any tendency to nonentity, but of a tendency to a certain deterioration and transition of state called "death." For, the body in the grave no more forfeits its existence as matter than does the incorruptible body. The purport of the language is, that the future body will not be capable of such decay as it suffers here, and consequently will be immortal, or everlasting, in *that revived form or condition*. The phrase, "King eternal, immortal," or, more exactly, "King eternal, incorruptible," refers, in the one term to the *duration*, in the other to the *nature* of the sovereign Lord.

Immortality seems to be used in the sense of unending perpetuity of a state whose quality is expressed by *other* words, as in the promise of eternal life to those who "seek for glory, honour," (expressing the state,) "and immortality," (expressing the duration of the state,) that is, immortal glory and honour. Or if the less plausible idea be adopted which makes immortality a distinct object of pursuit, it will then denote endless being. But that would in no way militate against the endless being of the wicked unaccompanied with glory and honour. Unending perpetuity of a certain state is its meaning in "life and immortality," that is, immortal life, brought to light by the Gospel. Or if any should insist that "immortality" here means endless future existence independently of state, it would signify that such a future for both good and bad was made known by the Gospel. Neither interpretation necessitates annihilation.

On the whole, whether we regard future incorruptibility and immortality as predicated only of the saved, or of both saved and lost, they are never so spoken of as to imply that any human being shall utterly discontinue to exist.

8. But our strongest, and, as we think, entirely fatal, objection to the dogma of annihilation of the wicked is the Scriptural revelations of their everlasting punishment. These are numerous and positive enough to overwhelm all the attempts at argument on the other side. The most cogent of these have been cited in our third chapter, and need no repetition. What is said of the deathless worm, quenchless eternal fire, everlasting contempt, everlasting punishment, eternal judgment, the abiding wrath of God, the ever-ascending smoke, and the bottomless pit, is so conclusive, that nothing short of the most unnatural twisting can produce the semblance of agreement with the theory of annihilation.

4. A further objection is, that Annihilationism removes the most powerful deterrent from sinful man which can appeal to human fear.

Tell mankind the penalty of the most wanton and diabolical conduct against God and man must surely by and by come to an end ; and there are great numbers who would feel the strongest check removed, and who would plunge headlong into ruin's gulf, in defiance of all authority, and oblivious of all the attractions of goodness. No good end can be gained by flattering human nature, especially on matters of deepest moment. Close observation has brought the conviction, that while

many are powerfully affected by a sense of right, and others are melted and drawn by the disclosures of Divine mercy, there are many others whose impiety nothing less than God's threatenings of an endless curse is likely to arrest. To such minds the difference between the prospect of a thousand years of suffering and a thousand millions is unfelt, because each is a long but limited period away in the future. But the difference between any terminable punishment and an endless one often strikes their attention with tremendous force, checking, restraining, and leading to an altered course, wherein nobler motives soon come into play, and the result is piety, morality, and eternal life. To warn such of annihilation is to beat the air; for to them it has no terror and no power. Should it be replied, that to such the motive power is not the danger of non-existence, but of the intermediate suffering, it is obvious to answer, that the same kind of motive becomes incalculably mightier when the dreaded evil is suffering without end. In order to prove the greater motive power of a lighter prospective penalty, it has been stated that the crime of sheep-stealing was more common when the penalty was capital than since. It may be so. But other causes have been at work. Law has been more strictly administered; and civilization has advanced. The proportion of murders has also increased, though the penalty remains capital. The adoption of a more severe treatment of garotters almost put an end to the crime. A free pardon may win and reform here and there a hardened criminal; but make it universal,

and who will venture to predict that effect in all? Doubtless many instances of the power of both the lighter and heavier penalty might be cited; but in all such cases the comparison is between limited penalties; whereas, in respect to the future world, it is between a *limited* and an *unlimited* one. Some of those which belong to this world, *e. g.*, strangulation, are final in relation to this life; but not in relation to the whole existence, nearly all of which is on the other side death. In the cases of the invisible world, the greater punishment in the comparison is irremissible and unceasing.

The loud protestations we sometimes hear from individuals, that fear of such a death had no place among the motives which influenced them for good, may be perfectly true in some cases. In others there is probably a defective analysis of their own mental processes; and whether so or not, there remains a large class who either acknowledge their susceptibility of being thus acted upon, or betray it by their conduct. Very daring, therefore, must he be who ventures, without the most complete and irresistible evidence, to draw the curtain over a doctrine by which God seems to appeal against sin to the deepest fears of His wayward human subjects.

5. Again: Annihilationism presumes to decide that the natural desert and effect of sin cannot exceed a limited space of time. But by what light or rule can this be ascertained? For aught we know, sin's just due may not be met by any number of years; and from the fact, that God *has* appointed numberless years, the

conclusion seems inevitable, that it deserves as much as He has threatened.

If the full desert of sin is to be endured by the sinner, on the theory of utter cessation of being, it must be all suffered *before* the point of cessation. But if so, why put him out of existence when no more suffering is due, and nothing stands against him? Why not start anew, if he has paid the uttermost farthing? If it should be answered, Because the negation of being is part of the punishment; we then ask, How can mere negation be a punishment? Privation may be one, if there be an entity to feel or endure it; but good or evil, pain or pleasure, can no more be attributed to that which has ceased to be, than to that which never was.

If escape from this dilemma be sought by asserting that sin deserves endless suffering, or more than will be actually endured antecedently to annihilation, but that all the rest was endured by Christ substitutionally; it would then follow that annihilation was a merciful way of escape, through the merit of Christ, from the full penalty. But this is directly contrary to the scriptural threatenings of destruction as a *curse* (not a deliverance) from which Christ died to save men. Thus, when once the plain Word of God is contravened, one absurdity leads to another, till confusion becomes worse confounded.

To summarize our objections against the annihilation of the wicked, let it be recollected that the analogy of nature says nothing for, but much against, it; that it weakens the most powerful warning against sin and

irreligion ; that it disagrees with the desert of sin, as far as that can be ascertained ; that the portions of Scripture on which it professes to be founded, on examination afford it no support ; and that it is flatly opposed to other portions which plainly teach the eternal misery of the obstinately perverse. A doctrine so altogether baseless, however decked in the charms of novelty, however welcome to fallen men, however loudly proclaimed and ably defended, however tenaciously clung to by those whose desires have the mastery of their judgments, has no possible chance of permanence ; but is destined to the receptacle of errors which have played a part in misleading poor groping humanity.

6. The difficulties of Annihilationism only increase if we proceed to inquire *when* the utter extinction shall be effected. The diversity of answers, it may be reasonably supposed, arises in some measure from the absence of any knowledge or rule apart from revelation by which to determine the full desert of sin as against God. Some fix the point myriads of years after the judgment day, others immediately after, and others at the period of natural death. Each of these opinions has its own special objections, in *addition* to those already urged against annihilation at *any* period.

(a.) On the notion of millions of years of suffering, and then an end of existence, the all-important object of dread is the long course of suffering. Through those ages upon ages of pain, the sufferer must look with strong desire for the end. The more acute the pain, the more will hope hail the approach of its

termination. Then the intervening ages must be the penal infliction, and annihilation the welcome deliverance. But, in describing it, the oracles of God lay the stress on the *destruction*. To "perish," to be "destroyed," to come to "perdition" and "destruction," is the deepest depth of evil,—the curse to be most of all avoided. It follows that it cannot be annihilation after countless years of misery; for that would be a blessing devoutly to be wished, in comparison with the antecedent pain. According to the bearing of this branch of Destructionism, Jesus, instead of warning against perdition, should have set it forth as the sole way of escape, and the object of earnest hope to all who pass beyond the provisions of redemption. It is clear the Annihilationist's idea of destruction and perdition as the termination of both suffering and being is widely different from our Lord's.

(b.) Annihilation, immediately after the sentence of the great day, is contrary to the principles and design of the general judgment. To "render to every man according to his deeds,"—"indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil,"—supposes the great weight of the penalty to fall upon him after the sentence is pronounced; which could not be, if the next step to judgment were to put the guilty out of being; for, as we have seen, that would be really no punishment at all. The Judge says, "Then He shall reward every man according to his works." But if He did it for the unsaved by simply annihilating them, the reward would be just the same to the greatest and smallest offenders; and to both

would be, strictly speaking, nothing. It is impossible to imagine the outer darkness, with its weeping and gnashing of teeth, and the lake of everlasting fire, into which the condemned will be cast immediately after the judgment, to signify mere nonentity.

(c.) Annihilation at death is beset with still further objections. *First.* It presents the most unsatisfactory view of the moral government of God. Little observation is needed to discover immense disproportion in the punishments of the wicked in this life. The want of correspondence between men's characters and their respective lots in this world confirms the declaration of Christ in the parable, that many an ungodly man has his "good things" or "enjoyments" here, and his torment hereafter. The present state evidently demands a sequel of rewards and punishments. The small remorse and misfortunes of some whose earthly prosperity is only surpassed by their iniquity, are an altogether inadequate retribution. In truth, if they were sufficient, other sinners, of a less malignant type, receive vastly more suffering than their due.

Secondly. It entirely removes the greatest bar to sin which could appeal to man's regard for his own safety, —the danger of painful and irremediable consequences. What have the reckless haters of God and goodness to deter them in their vicious rebellion, if they are assured death is to them the absolute end? Though their exuberant gratifications come by oppression, treachery, and murder, secured through this life, no after penalty awaits them. Make them certain of this, and what is to prevent their becoming fiends at once? Very

different is the voice of the Spirit: "Know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Thirdly. Jesus says Dives after his death woke up in the torments of hell. The doctrine we are combating teaches that death once reached by such men, there is nothing beyond. The Bible says the Lord knoweth how to "reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." This school of Destructionism says all is over with them at death. The Bible repeatedly and solemnly predicts the judgment of the wicked at the great day, which will be long after many of them have died; they are appointed once to die, "and after death the judgment." "He will judge the world in righteousness," when those on His left shall be "cursed," and driven "into everlasting fire." But we are told by some modern theologians, all the suffering and all the being of evil men are confined to this mortal life. Both witnesses cannot be true: which is to be believed? If the utter end of bad men comes at death, God's treatment of them is widely different from His dealings with bad angels, whose sin seems to date very far back, and who are still "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

We close our criticism of the theory of annihilation in these forms, with the conviction that it is destitute of a single claim to human credence, disowned by the voice of reason, and condemned by the word of God.

To escape the absurdities of annihilation, a crude modification is attempted, which disclaims proper

annihilation, and yet holds to the *destruction* of the souls of the wicked. From the language of its advocates, often vague and self-inconsistent, it is difficult to understand precisely their theory, (if, indeed, it is clearly conceived by themselves,) of the ultimate destiny of the spiritual nature of the condemned. One calls it "annihilation;" and another, in a foot-note, adds, "rather *destruction*." And yet they apply to it such expressions as "blotting out of existence;" to be "put out of conscious existence;" "the utter destruction of organization, the utter loss of life, and being, and existence;" "passed away out of being;" loss not only of "happiness, but themselves;" "termination" of "conscious existence;" "blotted out of creation;" "wrapt in the slumber of eternal death;" "no being destitute of the Divine nature will exist in the universe of God when He shall have completed His most glorious purpose." No wonder, therefore, that to other minds their distinction between annihilation and destruction should sometimes appear without a difference, and call forth argument of equal force against both. The lost condition of the soul is further represented as analogous to the death of the body, rendering it "utterly incapable of feeling, or acting, or performing any one of its functions," and as having to "cease to exist *as a man*." It is said, "Not a single material organization can be found that is indestructible: why should any spiritual organization be so?" So that, as far as we can make out their idea of the final state of the lost, the essence or substratum of being will continue for ever, but deprived of all action, power, feel-

ing, consciousness, and humanity. These gone, what is left? or why left? Perhaps scepticism was never driven to a more defenceless subterfuge, nor ever assumed a more groping attitude. Much that has been said against avowed Annihilationalism will bear equally against this modification of it, and needs no repetition here.* Some additional defects stand out to view in the following considerations.

1. It supposes the soul to be deprived of its essential properties, which involves a contradiction. Capability of consciousness, of moral character, of feeling and action, are, if anything can be, essential attributes of spirit or soul. Philosophy only knows its essence by its attributes; and some even go so far as to maintain, that besides the properties of either matter or spirit there is nothing. Without adopting the latter theory, it may suffice to remark, that to take away the power of thought, feeling, and action from the soul, is to take away everything. If it were possible for its essence to remain after its essential properties were gone, it would be, for all practical purposes and interests, tantamount to annihilation. Mind without capability of thought, feeling, or function, is as absurd in idea and impossible in fact as matter without size, or form, or divisibility. This aspect of the case may well

* This view, like the other, presumes to dictate that sin's desert cannot be interminable; and it also joins in diluting the most tremendous threatenings against sin. It emphatically declares its belief in everlasting punishment; yet inconsistently endeavours, like Universalism, to deprive "eternity" and "eternal," (*αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*), of their full and natural sense.—See *Rev. S. MINTON's* "Glory of Christ," pp. 41-55, 140.

account for the notable silence maintained by the exponents of the theory on the nature or state of myriads of spirits kept in being for ever, after having been stripped of all spiritual attributes.

2. It grossly mistakes the nature of the human soul, reasoning about it as if it were capable of decomposition, and consisted of component atoms, like a material body; calling it an "organization" and a "spiritual organism," which implies the co-operation of various *parts*: whereas the soul or spirit is an uncompounded, indivisible unit. There is no such thing as half, or constituent parts, of a soul. From its nature it cannot be made up of several elements. And though we speak of its faculties as several and distinct, it is by way of convenience and figure. The soul is one, and if in existence at all, must exist *as* a soul. Hence the fallacy of thinking death is with it, as with the body, a disorganization, or decomposition, or transmutation into something else than a soul. The analogy between death in the body and in the soul can only be carried as far as their natures will permit. As death in the body is disunion from the soul, so death in the soul is disunion from the loving God. As the body by death loses its normal state, so does the soul that dies. But to stretch the comparison by adding, that destruction of the soul is loss of organization and composition, as it is in the body, is to ascribe the properties of matter to spirit, and to divest spirit of its own peculiar and necessary properties. When therefore God threatens destruction to both body and soul, we are bound to

understand it in each case to be such as is *possible to the nature* of the subject.

There is, too, this further difference, that personal identity goes, not with the body, but the soul. So that while the elements of the body may possibly become the body of another person, or enter into the composition of several such bodies, no change can transform the soul into another person, or cause it to lose its identity. Therefore so long as it comes short of absolute annihilation, it is the *same* soul, and cannot be distributed like the particles of the body in ten thousand several places. What is peculiarly personal and human of the outward frame is in its *structure* and *functions*; what is human and personal in the spirit is in its *nature* or *essence*, and consequently nothing less than annihilation can destroy its personal identity.

It may be true that by natural death the human body ceases to exist *as a human body*, and to that extent ceases to exist "*as a man.*" But it cannot on that account be said the soul by death (or any change of state) ceases to exist *as a soul*; for it must be that or nothing. The man is chiefly in the soul, and as long as that continues the man continues *as a man*, although imperfect in relation to its corporeal habitation.

The theory, self-styled "*Redivivalism,*" according to which the wicked, after ages of suffering, and then a period of non-existence, will be re-created and raised to perfect eternal bliss, seeks support in a peculiar theory of creation and identity. Seizing on the idea that no creature can exist of itself, it infers that there must

be, in the continuation of the same soul or atom, a new act of creation every moment. It tells us a creature's personal identity is not the continuation of the same being or substance, but the *correlation* of successive beings ; involving the incessant origination of new substance, and equally incessant annihilation ; that God alone has proper identity, and the creature only a *constituted* one, by which the entity of each moment is endowed, by the direct act of God, with the suitable correlations to its predecessors and to all others ; hence, that as annihilation is thus taking place every moment with the soul of every person, the future annihilation of the wicked will be simply the same process *minus* the repetition of the creative act of God ; and that their subsequent re-creation for bliss will be the end of their chasm of non-existence.

To all this we reply, that it would be hard to prove, and presumptuous to assert, that God *cannot* keep the substance of the soul in existence, but must have recourse to incessant creations. Are we to say, God does not *preserve* in existence as well as create ? If He does, this theory falls to the ground, and we are authorized to believe man's identity, like his Maker's, may be one, not of mere correlation, but in sameness of immaterial substance.

Whatever creature exists must exist for a *space of time*, however (to us) inconceivably brief. And during that space (which must have beginning and end) God must *preserve* or sustain its existence. And if, during the smallest possible space of time, God sustains a

creature in being, He may do so during twice that time, and so a moment, an hour, a year, and through any length of duration.

In this matter, what holds of a single unit, holds of the universe of matter and spirit; which, on the theory under notice, is every moment annihilated, and every moment created anew. Then the universe of to-day is not in substance that of yesterday or the beginning. But this theory must have been very foreign to the inspired minds when they wrote, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "The heavens and the earth which are now by the same word are *kept in store*." "Thou *hast* created all things, and for Thy pleasure they *are* (exist) and *were created*." Where creation is meant in the lower sense of forming or developing, God may be said to create now, as in Isaiah xlviii. 7. But the origination of substance out of nothing is referred to as an act of the past. Speaking of the Son, Paul says, "By Him *were* all things created that *are*," and "by Him all things consist;" and John says, "He *made* all things" (not, is making). "The same was in the *beginning* with God. All things *were made by Him*." From which it appears that His past work *was* to create *in the beginning*, and His present to *sustain*. Thus Scripture and reason warrant us in holding that God's preservation of the unit and the universe is both a possibility and a fact, which effectually invalidates the speculation under discussion and the superstructure reared thereon.

Again, if the wicked soul is to be annihilated, and a new existence after a while created and endowed with

the consciousness that it is the *same* wicked being, that consciousness will be *untrue*; for the new being will certainly be *another*, being originated from nothing: whence we infer, that the All-perfect God, who cannot enact a falsehood, will never bring it to pass. If, on the other hand, instead of this false consciousness, the new being shall know it is *not* the same being as the one annihilated or as any pre-existent one, what becomes of identity? And what becomes of moral government, if one soul sins, suffers, and is annihilated, and a totally different one is placed in its stead in relation to eternal retribution?

It is important to consider, further, that this theory of incessant creations, if true, would but indifferently answer the purpose for which it is dragged in; for it would prove the perpetual annihilation of the righteous as well as the wicked, both before and after the final salvation of the latter. And if the continuous creation and annihilation of every finite thing through the course of time were granted, it would not analogically follow that there shall be a future chasm or suspension of existence for any part of creation. Such a break of non-existence would be extremely *unlike* anything which happens now within the whole field of observation, even if we adopted this unique philosophy of identity. Indeed, on any theory, the just inference by analogy is, that as there is no suspension of personal existence now, there will be none in the future.

Once more, assuming that, after a period of non-existence, God will re-create the soul of the wicked,

that is, create an entirely new soul, and endow it with the consciousness that it is the very person who sinned, was punished, and annihilated, and also with the new consciousness that it is then freed from all evil, the suspension of being becomes *superfluous*; for, whether long or short, the suspension is not a necessary step to the final bliss. Why should not God, instead of extinguishing it, instantly free it from evil, without any break in the personal identity? If it is to be arbitrarily put into a state of purity and blessedness after a temporary suspension of ages, why not at the close of a year, or a day, or a moment? and why not without any interval of nonentity? Testing the value of this species of "Redivivalism" by its ingenuity, it displays no superiority over the more familiar form of Universalism. Weighed in the balance of reason and Scripture, it is found singularly wanting.

3. It is *inconceivable* to the human mind; not in the same sense as infinity or eternity, which are so merely in *degree*, because the finite cannot grasp the infinite; but in the sense that the intellect cannot form an intelligent idea of the hypothesis. To speak of a spirit destitute of the attributes of a spirit, a soul without the qualities by which alone a soul is cognizable, the essence *minus* its properties, is to employ words which convey no intelligible meaning to the mind. The understanding naturally rejects the language as an empty mockery of its zest for new ideas.

4. Destruction in this sense would be, not a curse, but a *great boon*,—a deliverance which the sufferer would hail as the end of all his pain and sorrow.

Tell a man, in the agony of hell, the period approaches when destruction will terminate all mental and bodily suffering, and how he will long for the moment, as a lost wayfarer longs for the break of day ! But the destruction threatened by the Word of God is a most fearful penalty, the most terrible disaster. Whence we conclude, it cannot be that proclaimed by our modern Destructionists.

5. Such a destruction would be unfelt and unknown to its subjects, who by the very act would lose all capability of thought and feeling ; for if there be loss of existence, there can be no *consciousness* of loss : whereas that threatened in the Bible is a *conscious, moral, sentient, suffering* state, an abiding under the wrath of God ; “ he that is unjust, let him be unjust still,” — in quenchless fire, with the deathless worm, in everlasting contempt. Hence, again, the punishment foretold by these new teachers is not the same as that foretold by the Scriptures.

6. It misunderstands and misrepresents the Scriptural meaning of *life* and *death* ; interpreting “ life ” to mean existence as man in holiness and happiness, and “ death ” to mean existence not as man and *minus* holiness and unhappiness, happiness and unhappiness. The Scriptural difference is, that life is existence as man in holy bliss, and death existence as man in unholy misery. Which is the more simple and probable antithesis ? If life is not mere existence, but existence in a certain state, its opposite, death, is existence in the opposite state. This is the kind of opposition intended in all other uses of the terms “ life ” and “ death.” Now the opposite state to pure character and high enjoyment (which is

the living state) is not eternal dormancy or destitution of *all* character and feeling, but of all *good* character and *agreeable* feeling; while the bad may be actively present. Of course "life" and "death" are used with various shades of meaning. But the question here is respecting that highest life promised as the final reward of the righteous, and the final death to which God will doom the wicked. The words of Christ, are, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Whence we learn that the life and death are both experienced in this world; for believers have passed from one to the other, and so commenced the blessed life which shall be eternal; from which it follows that the death is as much a conscious, moral, sentient, human state as the life, and is consequently a very different thing from loss of conscious being. The death which sin brought, and which Christ died to redeem man from, (and it must include spiritual and eternal as well as physical death,) had already "passed upon all men,"* and yet had in no degree deprived them of mental, moral, and human attributes, and therefore was something totally different from "ceasing to exist as man."

To be "dead to" anything, often signifies to be alienated or separated from it, as to sin, to the law, to God, to the world. Attaching a kindred sense to the second or eternal death, it imports eternal alienation and disunion from God, involving the positive

* Compare Rom. v. 12-21, vi. 23.

corruption and misery which must result to such a creature cut off from the smile, and help, and blessing of the Lord of life and glory. The union of man with God, and all the unutterable good flowing therefrom, are the supreme life, which having no end are called "eternal."

One of the errors at the root of Destructionism is that we exist by Christ, and so without Christ we shall cease to exist. It is affirmed that unless saved by the redeeming work of Christ, the soul, as the result of sin, will lose its conscious being, and that only by receiving the gift of life procured by Christ's work can the conscious humanity continue for ever. The one is the Destructionist's notion of "death by sin;" the other of "life in Christ only." Thus, to retain conscious personal existence for ever is the effect of Christ's atoning work, and the peculiar privilege of those who receive His salvation.* True, we owe our being to Him, not however as Redeemer, but as Creator. He did not die to redeem us from non-existence, but from a cursed existence. We hold our being from Him, as do the inanimate rocks and clouds, not as Saviour, but Divine Creator. Our blessed Mediator is also pre-eminent throughout the universe of mind and matter. But His Divine sovereignty is not the effect of His Mediatorial. The essential notion of Mediator pre-supposes the existence of the two parties (God and man in this case) between whom He mediates. Hence, mediation not the basis of the existence of either party; but

* See "Life in Christ only" by E. White, pp. 14-16.

is superinduced upon it. If existence, in the strict meaning of the word, were procured by the redeeming work of Christ, then to be out of Christ would be nothing less than absolute annihilation. Yet, how many men at this moment exist who are out of Christ!

7. The boast of Destructionists is that all evil in the universe will come to an end. But according to their creed it will not be so. For there will be millions and millions deprived of human attributes, yet unrestored to goodness and pleasure. Wherever and whatever they may be, to remain in existence denuded of all trace of their original power and glory would be the perpetuation of evil, at least in the sense of loss, privation, or deterioration; and, as Destructionists and Universalists are accustomed to reason, it would be a standing proof of the Redeemer's failure. Moreover, to have each one "wrapt in the slumber of eternal death," and "the charred and burnt-out furnace of hell" with its "eternal lesson," "read without the shudder of anguish,"* ill comports with the idea that "every trace of sin and its results will be swept away for ever."†

8. When we inquire for the *Scriptural proofs* adduced in support of this eccentric dogma, we find they consist in passages twisted from their proper design, and from their natural harmony with the analogy of faith: a process by which Scripture may be made to teach anything. We have only space for a brief notice of the following.

Colossians i. 20. The expression "by Him" (the

* Rev. H. Constable.

† Rev. S. Minton.

Son) "to reconcile all things unto Himself," is fondly claimed as proof that after its accomplishment every part of creation shall be in healthy, harmonious union with God. The idea, however, is taken to the passage, not educed from it. "All things" cannot be taken with absolute universality of creation; for a considerable proportion is and always was in perfect accord with God's will; and, therefore, having never been at enmity, cannot be reconciled to Him. The attempted explanation is that the unfallen creatures are *preserved in harmony* with God; which only heightens the absurdity by making the word bear *two meanings in one* place as applied to the fallen and unfallen, the latter meaning being altogether inappropriate. To speak of those being restored to life who were never dead, or brought back to their native land who never left it, would not surpass the puerility which talks of reconciling those who were never at variance.

"All things" here no more includes every mind and atom in creation than every man, animal, and thing on the globe is included in the phrase, "was preached to every creature which is under heaven." (Verse 28.) And this view is confirmed by the difference in the enumerations of things in the sixteenth verse and the twentieth. The things *created* were all "that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers:" which probably include the powers of darkness. "All things" said to be *reconciled* are only "in earth" and "in heaven," which is perfectly consistent with the idea that His atoning death availed for Jews

and Gentiles, or for the Church triumphant and militant; for, as John Wesley says on verse 18: "From the whole (creation) He now descends to the most eminent part, the Church." To all the universe He holds the relation of Creator. (Verses 16, 17.) But to the members of His Church, whether in heaven or earth, He also holds the relation of Reconciler, "through the blood of His cross." That the full effect of the reconciliation is not unconditionally universal further appears from the contingency implied in the twenty-third verse, "*If* ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel."

"All things consist" by Christ. But if consistence were the same as reconciliation, as some seem to contend, it would prove that all things are *already* reconciled, long before the extinction of natural and moral evil; which is contrary to palpable fact.

Again: taking "all things" universally, the result preached by Destructionists would not be universal reconciliation; for they leave a large part of both the human and angelic species for ever in a state below conscious existence, and yet short of annihilation. How can they be said to be reconciled to Him, who are never restored to His likeness or favour? To reconcile a part, and reduce the rest to endless dormancy, or to nothing, would be such a reconciliation as might well make Destructionists glad to relinquish their universal interpretation of "all things," which disagrees with the tenor of Scripture as much as it does with the immediate context.

Matthew x. 28. Great stress is laid by the advocates of destruction upon the difference between to "kill" and to "destroy," in our Lord's warning: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." It is specially urged that to destroy, as applied to soul and body in hell, denotes more than to "kill," as applied to natural death, or extinction of natural life. Agreed. But what then? Loss of conscious being? That by no means follows. The death of the body is a calamity; but to plunge both body and soul into the second death, which is privation and ruin without mitigation or end, is a far greater calamity, and accounts for the urgency of our Lord's exhortation. Man has much more reason to fear such a punishment than the cessation of conscious being, which to one lost would really be a release.

Luke ix. 24; John xii. 25. Destructionism seeks a buttress in the words, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it." It is tenaciously held that the pronoun "*it*" refers to the *same thing* in the case of losing and the case of saving; that is, to the loss and gain of conscious being. Read in that view, it makes the following nonsense: "Whosoever will save his conscious existence shall lose his conscious existence: and whosoever will lose his conscious existence for my sake, the same shall save his conscious existence." So that the necessary condition of salvation is our willingness to pass out of conscious

being. What could be farther from the intention of the great Teacher? The evident meaning is, that he who sets the concerns of this life before those of the future, will miss life eternal, and inherit an eternity of death; and he who pursues the reverse course will secure life eternal, which comprehends the blessedness of heaven.

Matthew iii. 12. "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," claimed by Destructionists in proof of the utter consumption of the wicked as chaff is consumed by the fire, we claim as a proof of endless punishment. The resemblance of punishment in hell to the burning of chaff cannot be carried out in every particular, so as to make the soul combustible in the lake of fire; for the relation of that fire to the lost will only be in *some* respects the same as fire is to material substances. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." "Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire," could have no terror in the word "everlasting," if the subjects were not as lasting as the fire. The Baptist, alluding to the burning of winnowed chaff, intends a *likeness* in the punishment of sinners to the fire which burned the chaff in *severity*, and an *unlikeness* in point of *permanence*. The one was quenchable and soon over: the other is unquenchable and will never be over.

Revelation xx. 14. "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." True, death such as mortals suffer now, and *hades*, (whether it be the grave or the intermediate state,) personified in the description, are then no more, their work and power are gone for ever;

which is figuratively represented by their being cast into the lake of fire. But the *men* whom they cannot longer hold are sentenced "according to their works;" and the casting of the unsaved into the lake of fire is the second death; which, as they are real persons, and not mere personifications, is a conscious and sentient state.

1 John ii. 17. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Yes, he remaineth, not merely in being, but what he now is, a holy, happy child of God, in contrast to the glory of the world, which passeth away.

Isaiah lvii. 16. Thus saith the Lord: "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls which I have made." No. God in mercy ceases to contend, and begins to revive the rebel probationer, as soon as he becomes contrite and humble; and where rebellion is persisted in to the last, the sinner fails, succumbs, falls under the weight of the first, and afterwards of the second, death.

Ezekiel xviii. 29. The wicked turning to righteousness "shall save his soul alive." It does not say shall have existence, for he has that already; but shall secure its true blessedness.

Psalms cxxxix. 24. David's prayer, "Lead me in the way everlasting," was to be led into the course or state whose enjoyment should for ever abide; in contradistinction to the way or state of the wicked, whose pleasure shall perish.

Hebrews ix. 26. "Now once in the end of the

world hath He appeared to *put away sin* by the sacrifice of Himself." And so He did, by offering an atonement for the sins of mankind ; but on such conditions that any man may wilfully "neglect so great salvation," and reap the fruit in eternal suffering.

Hebrews xii. 29. "Our God is a consuming fire." It is surprising that support from this expression should be sought by either Destructionists or Universalists. We have no reason to suppose the fire which consumed Korah's followers terminated the conscious existence of their souls. Nor will the judgments of the same Authority deprive His enemies of power to think and feel. Is there any analogy to consumption by fire in the process of reducing souls to "eternal slumber," or to impersonality ? From the scope of the writer, and the use of the original words by Moses, in reference to God's treatment of His enemies,* we infer that such Divine vengeance on rejectors of the Gospel would not be a destruction of the *sin*, but a punishment of the *person* ; and such a punishment as would not annihilate the person, but bear down his active hostility, and make an end of his happiness.

Proverbs xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself : yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." The period of destruction, in the sense for whose indirect support this text is quoted, is the *end* of evil, and the commencement of a universal amity with God ; and therefore would be more appropriately styled the day of *good* than evil. The obvious idea in the proverb is that, while men are the authors of their own

* Deuteronomy iv. 24, ix. 3.

wickedness, the Sovereign sinned against will display His perfections in their final overthrow. A certain writer, who is shocked at the severity of eternal punishment as the result of persistent antagonism to God, cites this passage to prove that God created a part of the race to be inevitably reprobated. Such is *his* God, and such the monstrosity which finds a home in his mind.

Hebrews ii. 14 ; 1 John iii. 8. "That He" (the Son of God) "might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," is said to be explained by the clause in John, "that He might destroy the works of the devil;" and both are claimed by Destructionism. The weakness of this use, or rather abuse, of the two passages, lies in presupposing the devil and his works can only be destroyed in one way, namely, by blotting him and his followers out of conscious being. Was the devil's work in no degree destroyed when the way to God and heaven, which he had blocked up, was reopened by the Son of God for all mankind?—when Christ illumined the world with celestial truth, after Satan had darkened it?—when the Son sent His Spirit to renew all willing human hearts in the radiant image of God, which Satan had defaced?—when Jesus subjected devils to His Apostles, and "beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven?"—when eighteen centuries ago He spoiled "principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself?" And will He not complete His conquest when He shall shut up "the devil and his angels" in the woful prison "prepared for them?"

Here the Destructionist copies the Universalist, and declares eternal punishment would be God's "eternal defeat." But we are at a loss to conceive how perpetual subjection to penal treatment is to the inflicter more of a defeat than perpetual subjection to penal unconsciousness.

It is triumphantly affirmed that *hundreds* of passages are contained in the Bible in favour of the notion under review. Hundreds? yes, *thousands!* if they may be, like most of those already considered, disjointed, distorted, and accommodated, to suit the purpose of the advocate; and the same claim might be made by the most unscriptural doctrines that ever sought shelter under Biblical phraseology.

Just now a new advocate of Destructionism appears in the person of Dr. Joseph Parker, of the Poultry Chapel, London. In his "Old Truths in New Forms," he has tried to put a new and better face on the *alleged* truth of the extinction of condemned souls. The manifesto is somewhat ambiguous and faltering. There is a shrinking back from pronounced Annihilationism, Destructionism, and Restorationism; though the bearing of the whole is in favour of the first of the three, with language, here and there, consistent with the second and third. He seems to differ from Annihilationists, in that he rejects the word "annihilation," because it "may imply the use of *violence*; it may carry the meaning of an abrupt and even unnecessary termination of existence." So he substitutes the word "*terminableness*;" suggesting that in the one case the soul is put out of existence, like a fire

or candle-flame suddenly quenched, in the other allowed to "work itself out," and become extinct. As the extinction, whether accomplished by external appliances or an inherent tendency, whether suddenly or gradually, must be by the will and work of God ; (the slow disintegration of the mountain is as much God's work as its eruption ;) and as the tenor of Dr. Parker's discourses implies not only terminableness, but termination, what is all this show of discrimination but eloquent sophistry ? If Dr. Parker means that being shall literally cease, no matter how or when he is virtually, notwithstanding his consigning a less proportion of creation to nonentity than some Destructionists would, and despite his repudiation of the name, an Annihilationist. What else can he mean when he prominently puts the extinction as the antithesis to creation, thus : "What God in His Sovereignty creates, God can in His Sovereignty destroy ?" The *mode* of achieving annihilation is altogether irrelevant. We cannot but wish he had spoken more succinctly, or else waited till his views were more mature. There appears to be something tentative in his tenacious adherence to the word "terminableness ;" as if he feared to commit himself to the doctrine of extinction of the very being, as a certainty. Yet the heading of the third Lecture, "The Annihilation of the Soul ;" its reasoning and apparent drift ; its contrasting the expected cessation with the act of creation ; its statement that "as the penal fire existed *before* the human period, so it will exist *after* the human period ;" its allusion to the soul that sinneth dying "in the fullest sense,"

and being liable to be "utterly consumed and devoured by" the fire of God's judgment; its representing man as not immortal, but only a *candidate* for immortality; and Christianity as saying to him, "You *may* have immortal life;" and the insignificant reasons given for not employing the word "annihilation," having no respect to the essential identity of the two theories,—we think, warrant us in saying he designs to make the impression on his readers, that at least some of the souls of the wicked will cease to be.

His view appears to differ from those of most of the exponents of both Annihilationism and Destructionism, in that, while they expect the utter cessation of all sin and suffering, he supposes sin and retribution may continue for ever, though not in the *same person*. He holds that saints and angels may sin, and consequently suffer; and so the law of retribution may never finally cease to operate.* He contends that by the law of terminableness the guilty will pass into the fiery retribution, but not remain in it for ever; the fire being unquenchable, but the sinful soul "utterly consumed and devoured by it." In this non-natural sense he believes in everlasting punishment.

The two main pillars of his theory are, *First*, The distinction between "law" and 'punishment.' Law is impersonal, punishment is personal; law is universal, punishment is particular; law is unquenchable

* It will be seen that this disagrees with certain expressions in the same Lecture, (*e. g.*, p. 48,) where he speaks of sin in the universe as everlastingly possible, though not everlastingly actual. We can only deal with his teaching as we find it.

fire, a worm that dieth not, a torment of evil for ever and ever; punishment is the relation of the offender to that fire. The fire is there constantly; the law fills the universe because God fills it; it is omnipresent, terrible, everlasting."

Without tarrying to criticize the distinction, we observe that, for aught it implies, the punishment may be as everlasting as the law.

Moreover, if retributive law is the "unquenchable fire, a worm that dieth not," it follows that all mankind go into it; for what human being has not come under the law of retribution? Dr. Parker says the application of that eternal law is eternal punishment. Then, we say, eternal punishment is the lot of all sinful men on earth. But the Scriptures speak of it as reserved for the condemned in the future world. Dr. Parker is therefore preaching an everlasting punishment different from that preached by Christ and His Apostles. Jesus warned sinners against entering into the fire, and coming to feel the worm. But, on the hypothesis that the universal law of retribution was the fire and the worm, the warning was absurd; for they were subject to them already, just as far as the retribution of sin had come upon them, either federally by Adam, or by their personal wrong-doing. The only intelligible notion derivable from the New Testament threatenings of "unquenchable fire" and "everlasting punishment" is, not that the general law of retribution is eternal, but that the particular application of it to the lost is eternal.

Again: in the Scriptures, one chief element of the

threatenings is the *duration* of the punishment. Punishment might mean little, but for its being *everlasting*. The threatening of fire is terribly heightened by its being *unquenchable*. The most dreadful thing about the worm is that it *dieth not*. Assuming that the unquenchable fire was the eternal, universal, impersonal, omnipresent law, why are sinners not warned against its impersonality, universality, and omnipresence, as well as against its eternity? For, on the theory before us, they are as little concerned in its eternity as in its omnipresence. In the Bible the stress is laid on the perpetuity. But if the punishment could not be eternal to the *individuals* threatened, its eternity did not affect them. Since they could only pass through or into it, but could not remain in it always, all the urgent warning based on its perpetuity was a waste of words. Here, again, Dr. Parker and the Scriptures are at variance.

Further: the gulf impassable to Dives; the irremediable curse on Judas; the use of the second person singular in relation to the payment of the "uttermost farthing;" the prediction of wrath "abiding" on him who believeth not; and other expressions of the Old and New Testaments, teach that the eternity of punishment belongs not to the universe, but the *personal transgressor*.

Once more: according to Dr. Parker's teaching there will be "the everlasting *possibility*—though not everlasting *actuality*—of sin in the universe." Then, it seems, as no one person will suffer for ever, the period must arrive when the actuality of punishment

as well as of sin, will end either finally or temporarily. But that would falsify the words of Christ, that the punishment will be everlasting. Hence Christ's words, or the premises supplied by this theory, must be abandoned. Christ's teaching makes the punishment positively perpetual; this theory makes it intermittent and terminable.

The *Second* principal support of Dr. Parker's view is what he calls the *law of terminableness*. The argument is an analogical inference of what will be in the eternal state, from what is in the antecedent course of time. From the termination of the "heavens" and the "earth," of the mediatorial reign, of the intermediate state, and other changes "in nature, in history, in social relations, and in personal experience," it is inferred that "God proceeds upon terminable periods in the government of moral beings." An analogy is attempted between these periods and the duration of the miseries of the lost after judgment, by which it is intended to show that their penal state, and, as we take it, their *being* also, will terminate.

Granting that the Divine government of mind and matter includes terminable conditions, it would be a rare logic which could extort from this truth the conclusion that *all* conditions must terminate; and still rarer, if it could deduce Dr. Parker's conclusion, that terminableness belongs to the penalty of the wicked in hell, and not to the state of the saved in heaven. Apart, however, from this inconsequential reasoning, some parts of Dr. Parker's teaching would by implication render heaven terminable too. He asserts the

peccability of saints and angels in heaven, which involves the terminability of their holy life, and the possibility, on Dr. Parker's principle, of their coming under the penalty of sin, and their escaping that by the doorway of annihilation, or, as he prefers to call it, "termination." Whence it appears, whether Dr. Parker has thought of it or not, that the whole human race and all existing angels may ultimately find their way to utter extinction ; which, if true, would make a tremendous abatement from the promise of eternal life.*

* We cannot admire Dr. Parker's method of either raising or settling a side question, when he says, "*Sin began in heaven. Angels are free, angels have sinned, and angels may sin again. Sin, disobedience, rebellion, must be a constant possibility.*" (Pp. 48, 49.) Their original residence and sin in the place where unfallen angels and redeemed men shall enjoy their reward may be doubted. But however that may have been, supposing the first estate of angels to have been, as with men, *probationary*, it must have differed widely from their state of full *reward*. In the latter, saints and angels may remain free agents, and yet their circumstances and advanced moral state may create such an improbability of their sinning as may amount to a moral certainty, of which we may be as confident as that two and two are four.

God is free. Yet to speculate on His power to do wrong is an approach to profanity. But the same difficulty has often been raised respecting Him which is here raised respecting His saints. Dr. Parker reasons that moral freedom necessitates liability to sin, and that therefore angels and saints are liable ; and he suggests that God is not liable because He is infinite. But if freedom necessitates the possibility of sinning, how can infinity destroy that possibility ? Would it not be better to say God's infinite excellence removes Him from the moral possibility of the

Dr. Parker objects to the application of terminableness to heaven, because heaven is good. But as far as terminableness is applied to the spirits in hell from analogous and antecedent terminations, the inference is as sound in the one case as in the other; for antecedent states of goodness, as well as badness, terminate. To say there are *reasons* why heaven will not pass under this law of terminableness, is to say what may be equally affirmed of hell.

And, if the analogy were valid, the Universalist would have as much and more right to it than the Annihilationist; for while antecedent instances of terminableness of *state*, under the government of God, can be found, no instances can be found of terminableness by extinction of *being*. From the instances of terminable conditions Dr. Parker infers not only that the future condition of the lost may terminate, but their existence also. And the further inference, suggested rather than expressed, is that it *will* terminate. If these instances proved (which they do not) that no one *state* will continue for ever, they could not prove the cessation of *being*.

Again, the attempted analogy grossly mistakes the plan of Divine government; which includes states not only successive, but progressive, cumulative, and preparatory one for another. As far as men are concerned, we trace preliminary periods consummated in eternal life to the righteous, and eternal death to the

slightest wrong-doing; and saints and angels, though finite, are sufficiently removed by character, circumstances, and Divine blessing, to warrant the assertion that sin can never touch them?

wicked. In point of time the consummation is not a repetition of the earlier and preparatory steps. Under the vast and ceaseless government of God, man here is a probationer, determining his permanent state in the future. The future state, like the present, may be progressive with both saved and unsaved, without any termination of existence, or of blessedness in the one or woe in the other. That a principle operates under the Divine government of man in this life is no proof of its operation in the life hereafter. *E. g.*, Here the government proceeds on the principle of man's self-propagation of the species; of very imperfect rewards and punishments; of allowing the innocent to suffer involuntarily for the guilty. But who ever dreams that therefore the same laws will operate in man's eternal state? No more does it follow that the principle or law which terminates the successive dispensations in the world, the intermediate state, and the mediatorial reign, shall terminate either the sufferings or the being of the guilty in eternity. In fact, we are foretold the exact contrary. As far as the Great Ruler has divulged His plan, the present probation, and the state between it and judgment, are *preliminary* stages leading to life or punishment everlasting to each individual, as he fears God or despises Him.

This does not preclude epochs or periods in the future state of saved or lost. The one may rise higher in moral beauty and glory, and the other may sink deeper in perdition. Each may have marked stages or changes without any reversal of character and lot, or any negation of existence.

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This new phase of Annihilationism, like others, confounds accidental qualities with entities. The perishing of "the earth and the heavens;" (*i. e.*, being "changed," Heb. i. 12;) the termination of the natural day; the burning out of a candle or a fire; the death of summer insects by cold; the ending of temporal probation, intermediate state, and mediatorial reign,—all employed by Dr. Parker to illustrate his conception of what will probably happen to lost spirits,—are none of them an annihilation of existence, or, to keep to his favourite word, a "termination" of real existence, but simply of accidental qualities, states, or conditions of things. Hence he can never get out of them a "law" for terminating the entity of a single soul. All the known facts of God's government are against the conclusion to which he points. Indeed, they distinctly point the other way. We defy him to find in them a solitary instance of absolute termination of either matter or spirit. The just analogical argument is that, as termination of being is foreign to all we know in God's government now, it probably will be the same in the future. Add to this the teaching of revelation, and this new aspect of Annihilationism is as false as the old.

There is a singular gravitation of the advocates of all theories of the destiny of the wicked to the apocalyptic phrase, "second death;" each claiming it in support of his own view. To this rule Dr. Parker is no exception; for he says the phrase "implies the principle of terminableness." True, it implies the end of the state immediately preceding; but it in no way implies the

end of the penal state it describes. The context implies the reverse ; for it informs us the second death is the lake of fire, and that in the lake of fire condemned spirits "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

It is assumed by Dr. Parker, as by others, that the orthodox view of the duration of punishment is founded essentially on the doctrine of the *natural and necessary immortality of the soul*. This is a mistake, which vitiates much of their adverse reasoning. The question is not whether God *can* annihilate the soul He has created, but *will* He ? Looking at power abstractedly, He has the natural ability to do many things which we are certified He will not do ; (*e. g.*, to destroy the inhabitants of heaven ; to doom a holy man to perdition ; to place a rebellious fiend at His right hand, etc.) But looking at all His perfections as directly contrary to a particular action, it is to the glory and not the disparagement of God that such action is seen to be morally impossible to Him. Besides the pledge of immortality implied in the revelation of eternal rewards and punishments, there may be other reasons in the principles of moral government or the nature of the soul, which, if known, might justify the use of an expression employed by Dr. Parker in "*Ecce Deus*," but now recanted, viz., that "*God cannot annihilate a moral agent*." By the immortality of the soul we do not mean that we know God has no power to end its existence, but that it cannot be ended by any power of its own, or of any other creature ; and that God wills its ceaseless continuance. Such immortality granted,

it becomes a foundation-stone of an argument for eternal punishment. But, *not* granted, the doctrine of endless punishment, proved by the testimony of Scripture, remains, and becomes the foundation-stone of an argument for the immortality of the soul. Both lines of reasoning are sound ; the first making the doctrine of the soul's immortality subservient to that of eternal punishment ; the second resting the truth of eternal punishment on direct revelation, and from that inferring the soul's immortality. We could afford to waive all argumentation on the natural immortality of the soul from mental phenomena, and stake the issue on God's word. Our chief basis of evidence is Scripture, not nature. We concur with those who say the soul of man is constituted immortal, and therefore the punishment denounced against the wicked soul must be for ever ; but it is equally true and more important to say, God reveals that the wicked shall suffer for ever, and the righteous be happy for ever, and therefore both must exist for ever. The doctrine of terminableness, applied to the being or suffering of an infernal spirit, is shut out beforehand by the distinct revelation of everlasting punishment.

It is possible that Dr. Parker has not intended to teach absolute annihilation of any lost spirit, but some such idea of cessation of conscious evil as is held by Destructionists of Mr. Minton's class. This, however, would not much affect the relevancy of our remarks ; for it will be found that nearly all our objections to his views will hold on either supposition.

Our deep regret that Dr. Parker has lent his popular

eloquence to so ill-founded a cause is slightly relieved by the sincere hope that, as his views on the subject are of recent adoption, and avowedly incomplete, and as he is still prepared to "modify, confirm, or abandon them," according to the demands of "further light," he may yet receive such help from the Father of Lights as shall, ere long, lead to their abandonment.

II. The other alternative theory is *universal restoration* of all fallen intelligences to purity, peace, and joy, which shall never end. It has been to some extent already discussed in these pages, but needs some additional notice in respect to the *method* of its accomplishment.

Most of the objections raised against annihilation at death, or the day of judgment, would also hold against restoration of evil men at those periods, though in some points more strongly. For example, the inequality of rewards and punishments, on the supposition of no suffering in the world to come, becomes far more glaring, if those who deserve it are at once translated to eternal bliss. For, then the issues of vice and virtue, piety and impiety, are much alike. Some Universalists have endeavoured to extricate themselves from this objection by adopting the notion that the future world has neither rewards nor punishments for behaviour in this world; and that all the rewards and punishments due to this life are enjoyed and suffered *in* this life,—chiefly in the way of an excusing and accusing conscience. Such opinion is certainly as contrary to the Scriptures as to the facts of human experience. Conscience is a faculty capable

of losing its edge, until the sins which at an earlier stage produced immediate poignant remorse may be indulged to a tenfold greater degree almost without a qualm ; while, in minds where its voice is attentively listened to, the slightest departure from the path of duty is followed by terrible self-accusation. The deeper sunk a man is in sin, the less action he is likely to give to a reproachful conscience ; which sufficiently accounts for the manifest disproportion of rewards and punishments to the respective deserts of men on this side the grave. Too often the wicked not only prosper in temporal good, but manage to benumb their souls against remorse, and thus escape the just recompense of their conduct ; while virtuous men can only hope for their chief reward at the resurrection of the just. So felt Paul when he wrote, " If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." " Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." " For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." " Now they do it " (strive) " to obtain a corruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible." " Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

The advocates of the idea we are combatting say the harvest must be reaped where the seed is sown, that is, in this world. This is one of the feeblest attempts ever made to pass off an illustration for a proof. It may

show the author's meaning, but cannot in the least substantiate it. If the metaphor of sowing and reaping must be carried out in all respects, which is by no means necessary, it would be as rational to make the soul of the sower the field as the material globe he lives on, or the small portion he occupies of it: and then the sowing and reaping would be wherever the *person* was.

Paul follows in the wake of Jesus, who spoke of the narrow way that *leadeth unto* life, and a broad way that *leadeth to* destruction. He said to the church at Smyrna, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" and He depicted the rich man as suffering torment after his burial for conduct anterior to death. Paul tells the Corinthians, every one shall receive at the judgment-seat of Christ "the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It would be a marvel that in face of such revelations men should deny future awards for present conduct and character, were the deniers not generally those who prune and shape the Scriptures to their creed instead of conforming their creed to the Scriptures.

Universal restoration after a long indefinite cycle of ages appears highly improbable, if it be inquired *how* it is to be effected. The subjects on whom it is to take place are in a condition of guilt, corruption, and misery. The misery is the result of the guilt and corruption. It cannot be removed without their removal. As long as the condemnation for past sins, and perversity of the moral nature, remain, suffering

must remain. With the same causes there will be the same effect. Hence, the two great subjective barriers to happiness are guilt and corruption. The one keeps the doomed under the frown of the *Sovereign Judge*, the other keeps them at enmity with Him. To dispose of either of the two alone, if it were possible, would not suffice; for the remaining guilt or corruption would effectually bar the happiness, whether the location were in hell or heaven. Nothing can accomplish their felicity which does not free them from both condemnation and heart-depravity. What forces or means can bring about this stupendous change in the spirits of the lost? Five answers might be suggested; but only to find that each of their several modes of deliverance is ineffectual or unavailable: namely, by the mediation of Christ, by the influences of external persons and things, by restoration, by the direct power of God, and by a combination of some or all of these methods.

1. In the fifth chapter it has been shown that the mediation of Christ will not be then available, however freely proffered and pressed on men's attention now.

2. The influences surrounding a fallen spirit are not of a kind to purify, much less to deliver from guilt. The fire, the worm, the blackness of darkness, the company of evil spirits, may cause trouble and pain, but have in them no virtue to produce moral purity. They cannot impart what they do not possess. Chastisement on earth often promotes religion because accompanied by the effectual grace of God. But mere pain, while it may deeply convince of the evil

results of sin, has no intrinsic property or tendency to produce virtue or religion. If malicious spirits act upon each other there as they do here, the bearing of such company will be to make bad worse, "from deep to deeper sinking." Even if the associations of the lost had any tendency to teach the advantage of goodness, they have no power to produce it. Moreover, were the difficulty of innate corruption got over, there would remain the guilt. Surely they have no power to bestow pardon.

Accordingly, we find judgment, the second death, and hell-fire, in relation to the condemned, are set forth as painful and punitive, never as restorative and merciful. It is "judgment without mercy," and for the purpose of rendering to them the desert of "their deeds." It is "judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries," It is not purgation, but "torment" appointed by the "unmixed wrath of God," whose smoke "ascendeth up for ever and ever." To be "saved so as by fire," as appears from the context, refers to the ordeals which should try the teaching of a Christian minister, consuming all but the genuine truth, yet not consuming the man. "The lake of fire" is as unlikely to have a sanctifying virtue as is James's metaphorical fire—that "world of iniquity, which sets on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell."

A feeble though eager attempt has been made * to extract the principle of *salvation by destruction in hell*,

* Rev. A. Jukes's "Restitution of all Things," pp. 83, 84, 98.

from Paul's direction concerning the incestuous offender at Corinth: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." How little countenance the principle gets from this place may appear, if it be noted, (a.) That the thing to be saved was not the thing to be destroyed. (b.) That the process of recovering the spirit was to be in *time*, namely, during the day of gracious opportunity and influence; and therefore is no criterion of the treatment of those who have passed beyond their day of grace. (c.) Even in time there was no absolute certainty of reclaiming the offender, unless we suppose the process will forcibly overpower, that is, destroy his free agency: much less is there any such certainty respecting the effects to be produced in the world to come. (d.) The delivery to Satan did not *make* him a child of Satan, but *exposed* him as one, in order to bring home the sense of his wrong-doing. It involved an open practical condemnation of his carnality, to lead him to put it away, and return to Christ. His name was assigned to the category to which his character belonged, in the hope of its breeding reflection such as might, under Divine blessing, induce repentance unto salvation. To conclude from this case that God "delivers even Christians to Satan," is as unwarrantable as to conclude that Satan is God's agent to purify the wicked in hell.

3. Self-restoration is equally hopeless. Supposing the alienation from God in the future to be an aggravation of the present, what is to effect the reversal? In morals and religion, it is a wonder for a clean thing to be brought out of an unclean. But for the unclean to *make itself* clean is impossible. It would seem as easy for a man to create himself as by his own will and power to produce in himself holiness where nothing but sin was. How is the first good principle to originate in a soul whose principles all tend the opposite way? Whence is to come the first holy volition? God so commonly operates upon the minds of ill-disposed men, in this probationary state, to incite and empower them to be virtuous, that we are apt to overlook the utter inability of a polluted soul to purify itself when bereft of the gracious influences vouchsafed in this season of opportunity. As a body once set falling through space has no inherent power to reverse its direction, so a soul having once begun to descend, and being left to itself, has no inherent inclination or force to ascend to holiness and God.

But here again, enmity to God is but half the difficulty. How is the condemnation for past offences to be disposed of? Can a criminal, devoid of all virtue and worth, atone for his own sin? Can he persuade the righteous Sovereign to ignore it, who has declared it shall not go unpunished? Alas, his prison door is double locked, and he has no key to open it. It might be suggested that by lapse of long duration the *whole* penalty of sin might be endured, and then

escape become due as a matter of justice. Such suggestion, however, presumes to decide that sin's desert is not necessarily interminable, which both lacks proof, and is opposed to God's actual appointment. Moreover, it presumes that with a sinful bias the soul through all those ages of endurance would indulge in no additional sin. For, if it went on sinning, no simultaneous suffering could lessen the penalty remaining due. But, granting for the moment that guilt might be thus disposed of, the thoroughly depraved could never rectify itself.

4. Concerning restoration by the direct and absolute power of the Almighty, we have not only the revelation that He *will not* so employ it, but the extreme unlikelihood arising from the nature of the case. We know of no pardon for fallen men except in consideration of the merit of Christ; but that avails not in perdition. Nor does there appear to be any other consideration which may answer the same purpose. If a simple fiat of God's authority might empty the bottomless pit, why not a similar fiat have obviated the necessity of the humiliation of the Divine Son for the redemption of mankind? and why not in the same way have prevented all the agonies and inconveniences ever incurred by sin? It is easy to talk of sovereign fiats wherever there are obstacles to a favourite theory to be removed. God, however, does not issue them at random, but always in harmony with the principles of righteous government. Divine power put forth to coerce a fallen spirit into holiness, and Divine goodness remitting all his offences, must

proceed in accordance with Divine justice as expressed in the Divine government. There we learn that sin shall not go unpunished : " The wages of sin is death : " and so firmly is this principle adhered to that, in order to render guilty man's deliverance possible, the spotless Lamb had to endure the curse in his stead. Therefore, to say the absolute almighty power *can* unconditionally terminate all sin and suffering is somewhat like saying it *can* subject holy angels to unmerited pain. As a question of mere strength there may be nothing to hinder. But, as God never acts out of agreement with unsullied justice, it is more correct to say, He cannot do either the one or the other.

5. Thus each one of these modes of restoration fails, and so does any conceivable combination of them. Not one of them offers a ground on which the Supreme may accomplish it ; nor any appliances, or forces in the fallen, by which they may deliver themselves. True wisdom would recall us from a fruitless search after ways of escape from future anguish, and set our hearts on embracing the teeming overtures with which this day of life abounds.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS.

"They who faithfully practise what they do know, and live agreeably to the belief which they have, and to the just and rational consequences of that belief, seldom fail to proceed further, and to acquire more and more confidence in the truth of religion."—DR. PALEY.

A MENTAL state which could study this subject as a mere matter of speculation, or as an exercise in polemics, we should take to be unhealthy. The effect of earnest faith in the grave doctrine we have been discussing must deeply impress itself on the inward experience and the outward life. God has evidently intended it so to operate.

1. One legitimate result of this investigation is that those who are convinced of the truth of the doctrine should faithfully and courageously *stand by it*. It is wiser and nobler to honour our conscientious convictions than to succumb under the hard names with which they are attacked. Of such name-calling there is no lack in the present instance. To denounce the doctrine as a "horrid dogma,"—a "monstrous excrescence,"—a "monstrous perversion,"—an "incubus" on Christianity,—a "millstone tied about the neck of inspiration,"—a "hideous doctrine,"—a

"hideous dream,"—a "terrible fiction,"—as "poison" mingled with the Gospel by "the craft of Satan,"—as "narrow, cruel, heathen,"—and its earnest preachers as "brawlers of damnation,"—may shake the faith of the superficial and alarm the timid; but by stouter hearts and acuter intellects will be taken for a symptom of angry weakness, if not as an attempt to palm upon the world raving for reasoning and declamation for evidence, which are nowhere more out of place than in dealing with a subject so profoundly serious. The same pointless weapons have been brandished times without number against the Divinity of our Lord, and other most precious verities of pure religion.

Better forego men's esteem than the truth of God. Better bear reproach than escape by adopting a lie. To an honest mind truth is dearer than the most flattering falsehood. It is of more value than the quickly fading plumes of an "advanced" school of theology. There is a bright side to every truth, although at present only the dark may be visible. To the disciples the surrender of our Lord to His foes showed only its dark side; but afterwards they saw its bright one. The lustre of a truth, like that of a gem, may be concealed under a dull exterior, until God at a higher stage develop it. So this awful truth of everlasting punishment, unveiled by inspiration, may, under the fuller light of the world to come, appear in much more pleasing relation to other truths. For aught we know, it may then display the perfection of God, though no beauty on the side of self-destroyed men. However that may be, the stamp of truth which

God has put upon it is reason ample for our believing and owning it at all hazards. He who is consciously ashamed of God's Word is ashamed of its Author, and may expect God to be ashamed of him when most he needs to be acknowledged.

2. It behoves us who are convinced of the truth of the doctrine to let it have its natural and full effect upon our *efforts for our own salvation*. The great object of the present life is not in itself, but in possession of life eternal. This stage of being is but our period of schooling for a maturity far more enduring. If from this stage, and according to our state on it, we pass to the most glorious or miserable destiny, if we gain all or lose all as now we take this course or that, surely it becomes all men to subordinate every interest and project to that which is paramount, and to watch and pray, and believe, and strive, as those who are thereby making solemn choice between irrevocable ruin and godlike felicity. The interests of time are apt to engross thought and feeling to the practical exclusion of the things "unseen" and eternal; and thus men come to have convictions on matters most sacred and vital, which they never, or but feebly, act upon. Belief dwindles to speculation or opinion. The mind lets go the power of the truth, and retains only its verbal form, giving some point to the reproach that the gravest religious doctrines are not really believed by their professed adherents. The charge is just, not as against the doctrines, but as against the inconsistent perilous indifference of those who admit their truth, yet neutralize their practical and saving force.

Confronted by the doctrine of endless perdition, one who prefers living only for the present is strongly tempted to seek a change of conviction instead of a change of character. The wise course would be to conform his state of heart to the admonitory demands of the truth. The danger is of endeavouring, it may be almost unconsciously, to adapt his belief to his wishes, and to render his passage to ruin the more easy by diluting God's most awful warnings. The moment he can, by this process, bring his mind to conclude that the worst effect of sin can be only for a time, he may experience a feeling of relief. But his danger is heightened more than his fears are allayed. The operations of mind and heart are often too subtle to be minutely traced and remembered even by their subject. The disingenuous turn of reflection, the sinister play of feeling upon the reasoning, the momentary warping of judgment, the avoidance of evidence, the latent sway of attention by the will under specious excuses, the pervasive bias for the agreeable rather than the true, may leave but the faintest reminiscences of wrong, which soon give place to the assurance of thorough integrity. But in all such mental complications the Searcher of hearts makes no mistake. Every admixture of the moral with the intellectual, every manœuvre of self-delusion, and every shade of moral defect, are naked and open before Him. Much more than is generally supposed of man's guilt before God has its origin in these innumerable and intricate workings of the inner man. If jealousy of self-deception is anywhere appropriate, it must be especially so in deal-

ing with Heaven's most dreadful warnings. Finding the truth revealed, while our faculties may be fitly exercised on its various supports and bearings, it is not for us to fight against it. Whether it cross or commend itself to our feelings, it is our duty and interest to shape our behaviour according to the light it brings, since it is certified to us by Him whose judgments are a mighty deep, but who is "too wise to err, and too good to be unkind."

It is not necessary to concentrate our attention perpetually on the subject: other topics have their work to do upon us. Nevertheless, its place in the sacred oracles, and its potent relation to our deepest interests, claim for it a place in our meditations, and a godward, heavenward influence over our character and conduct. Against the danger of dwelling too incessantly on the subject we need hardly guard. There is far more danger of excluding it, or of bestowing only such rapid and occasional glances as can produce no effect on the heart and life. The folly of simply bandaging or averting the eyes to avoid walking over a frightful precipice is of the same nature, but of inferior magnitude to that which disposes of the warnings of eternal woe by simply ignoring them. Shall each soul live for ever, exalted to all that is pure, delightful, and glorious, or be degraded by sin, and banished beyond recovery? and shall its destiny be determined in the present life? Then how the thought should stimulate our endeavour to lay hold on life eternal! how it should moderate our estimation of the transient affairs of earth! and what tremendous depth of meaning

it imparts to the question of our Lord, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Fellow man! are you in the broad way of transgressors? Think! It leads to destruction. Stop: and seek the narrow way which leadeth unto life. It is neither sin nor error to fear what God threatens. The sin is in giving it a deaf ear. Consider how much you have to win or lose. The difference is beyond all expression. The ruin to which you tend is ceaseless. You have reason for solicitude, and alarm, and trembling, and aroused energy. No good will come of a morbid sentimental brooding over the subject, unless it stir you to earnest *action*. You cannot change the law; but you may flee from the wrath to come by the new and living way of access to the Father. You cannot falsify the truth of God; but you may let it work down into your will until it has driven you to Him whose

"Arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste and live."

8. Our belief in the doctrine may well quicken our *zeal for the salvation of our fellow men*. In its light, read Jude's exhortation: "Of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire:" and we may reasonably feel stimulated to conquer our reserve and lethargy, and betray a restless concern for the salvation of friends

and neighbours. Let our sympathy take the immediate practical form of striving with our might to win their souls, rather than waste the precious opportunity in plaintive laments about how we shall feel for them in the world to come. Famine, plague, war, commercial distress, in any section of our human race very properly call forth our pity and help. How much more should the spiritual indifference of so many neighbours who seem to stand in jeopardy of irreversible woe! Their greediness of earth, their insensibility to spiritual joys, their obliviousness of things eternal, which may tempt us to the paralysis of despair, ought rather to increase our solicitude and exertions to deliver them from going down to the pit.

The *mode* of action may admit of endless variety. Procedure by exact rule may be impracticable. Still, a heart glowing with zeal, fed by reflection on the prospects of surrounding souls, will not be inactive. Ecclesiastical office will not be deemed the only channel of usefulness. "Where there is a will, there is a way." Prayer, persuasion, casual conversation, practical measures, will be called into requisition according to circumstances, and pushed with all the tact, energy, and perseverance of a heart burning with desire to compass a magnificent end.

4. This doctrine ought to have a considerable place and power in the *preaching* of the Gospel. True, it is not the attractive part of the message; but it is the sombre background which gives distinctness to the beauty of redeeming love. The rest without it is an incomplete message, something less than the whole

counsel of God. Its removal would diminish the preciousness of the glad tidings of salvation, inasmuch as then the salvation would seem to be from a much smaller evil. Who, under the name of Christ's ambassador, can suppress it with impunity? Shall a fallible messenger presume to improve the grand message of his Lord? or to be wiser than the Saviour as to what truths are adapted to reclaim fallen men? Is he at liberty to proclaim only those portions of the truth which are congenial to the tastes of himself or his hearers? Does it become him to muffle the great bell by which God calls on millions to prepare to meet Him? or to dull the edge of the Spirit's sword by which thickly encased consciences are to be pierced? To hold out a baseless hope of escape, lest the feelings should be perturbed, when a truer and fuller statement would show the ground of a genuine hope, is cruelty to the audience and unfaithfulness to Christ. It may be that some excel in presenting a particular branch of the message, and others in presenting another, while a third may be equally gifted for unfolding the whole circle of Gospel truth. And although instances can be cited where the pleasing aspects alone of the Gospel were preached with success, the recipients probably owed a measure of their preparedness to some ideas of its darker aspects derived on other, perhaps forgotten, occasions. But that it be all set forth by the Christian ministry appears to be a necessity arising out of a Divine arrangement, that its several parts shall harmoniously perform their respective functions in the grand work of human

redemption. It is easy to prophesy smooth things ; but, alas ! it is too often the ease of steering a ship with its freight of human beings down the seductive circuits of the whirlpool.

There is as little need for preachers to exaggerate the consequence of sin as to pander to the inclination of the sinner. Truly the duration of the penal result *cannot* be exaggerated, and no imaginary pictures sketched by the preacher can be stronger to stir the conscience than the clear teachings of inspiration. Still less need is there for those grotesque caricatures of hell, which are drawn by the excited fancy of some, and held forth as if drawn from the Word of God, and which too frequently retard the cause they are intended to promote. Let all the powers of persuasion be laid under tribute in a business so momentous ; but where God is silent respecting the invisible world, we may not dogmatically pronounce. The veil is sufficiently lifted to discover cause for earnest warning ; but it ill becomes us to try to tear off the curtain which the Holy Ghost has not removed.

We do not advocate a perpetual discussion of this terrible doctrine, as if it were simply revealed to supply food for polemics, or as if the object of preaching were to induce that unsettled and often distracted state of mind which is "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." The free and active mind may have examined and decided for itself with intelligent care certain great questions, and may reasonably refuse to depose or unsettle its

conclusions at the approach of every new disputant. The preaching of this doctrine is designed not merely to show its firm Scriptural base, but also to utilize the leverage it affords in persuading men from sin to holiness.

Such preaching is compatible with tenderest sympathy, yearning affection, and most strenuous exertion in behalf of the perishing. He who would most earnestly alarm the inmates of a burning house, or the inhabitants of a city in danger of being deluged, is not behind others in humaneness, nor unable to rejoice in the real prosperity of his neighbour. He can, in other relations, display all that is social, and genial, and gladsome. So the faithful preacher of "the terror of the Lord" is as likely as any to cherish tender, overwhelming, generous affection, and at the rise of dead souls to life to feel the glorious gush of grateful emotion. His fidelity in declaring unwelcome truth, whether men will hear or forbear, is proof of pure, strong, active love, and not of misanthropy.

Happily this doctrine does not stand alone as a solitary dread monument of sovereign justice amid the hopeless desolation of our species. It is accompanied with the richest exhibitions of saving mercy and power. Whatever endless punishment may be, the *revelation* of it, while escape is possible, is a mercy to mortal men, and it naturally links itself with the proclamation of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. If it tells the manslayer justice is on his track, it is to hasten his flight to the city of refuge. If it shows men the quenchless flame, and

deathless worm, and blackness of darkness for ever, it is to urge them away to the everlasting kingdom, "where all is calm, and joy, and peace."

Does the preacher want an authoritative precedent—an exact standard—a perfect exemplar? There it is, in the faultless preaching of his Master, who knew when to warn and when to cheer, how to cover the stubbornly impenitent with scathing rebuke, and how to distil words of pardon on the contrite. The terms of His great commission ran, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Then who will dare to lop off *either* branch of that Gospel law, or give it a narrower meaning than Christ has given it elsewhere? Now He threatens a fate heavier than that of Sodom and Gomorrah; then implores dying men to come unto Him for life. Now He portrays the weeping and wailing of the finally reprobate, whence there is no way to the Saviour; then seeks to avert that hopeless doom by inviting them to a region in which they may shine as the stars for ever and ever. Now He proclaims the blessing of Heaven to a rebellious people; and when that is spurned, weeps over their incorrigible bent towards self-destruction. From His lips falls the terrible fate of the wantonly, obstinately perverse, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" And from the same lips issues the sentence of all who will turn in time, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." Approached at the throne of grace, His answers teem with pardon, peace, and joy, for the guilty. From the throne of

judgment the same Jesus passes sentence of "everlasting punishment." No living preacher may speak with the authority of the Son of God. But he may learn from His example how to blend the rays of revealed truth, so that all the essential colours, if not the lights and shades, shall be faithfully reflected upon the mental vision of the multitudes for whom it is given. The Divine beauty and sublimity of the Great Teacher he may never equal; but breathing His spirit, seeking His objects, and presenting every great department of His expressed mind, he *may* be a faithful herald, whose trumpet shall give no uncertain sound, and whose crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord shall be a goodly multitude of ransomed souls.

It is worse than folly to comfort the sinful by explaining away the duration of their penalty. It is a repetition of "Thou shalt not surely die," which, besides being untrue, is an untruth on a matter where the listener has his all at stake. Much safer is it for preachers and hearers to look the worst in the face, that the wanderer may turn, while it remains possible, to the one sure way of escape—"narrow," as it excludes allegiance to sin, yet, as to the provision of mercy, wide enough for the world's swarming millions, and terminating in the ample inheritance of the sons of God. Thus the pent-up grief of Christ's ambassadors, caused by the wilful hazard of the disobedient, finds its most healthy and useful relief. Well may the energies of all who believe

in the doctrine of the future state, so plainly and solemnly proclaimed by Jesus, be roused to recall the wayward from their downward career to seek Him, who, because He tasted death for every man, would gladly be to every poor earthly wanderer "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

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APPENDIX

On "The Victory of Divine Goodness. By the Rev. T. R. Birks, M.A." Rivingtons, 1870.

TO deal fully with the peculiar views of Future Punishment broached in Mr. Birks's book is not strictly necessary to our purpose, inasmuch as he emphatically reiterates his belief in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Yet his qualifications and premises come so near to Universalism as to create a danger, and demand some notice. To those who are always ready to welcome any relaxation of Divine threatening, this novel doctrine, however devoid of Scriptural support, will offer a subterfuge. All its author's protests against any repeal or termination of the final sentence will probably not suffice to prevent their finding encouragement to sin in the prospect of a much lighter penalty than is held out by the plainest terms of Holy Writ: especially as the new doctrine comes from a clergyman of high intellectual repute, and one of the most earnest vindicators of evangelical Christianity.

Like many who have adopted Destructionism or Universalism, Mr. Birks evidently approaches the sub-

ject with a *predilection* to find out some lenitive modification of the view which lies on the face of the Scriptures. The pleas of human preference seem to exert a powerful influence on his interpretation. Did there happen to be no difficulty elsewhere, he would have none in the meaning of that Scripture language whose plain strong words he softens down to meet the suggestions of "humanity." He may suppose the opinions, by which he relaxes the sacred descriptions of the penal state, are "inferences" from another class of inspired testimonies on the perfections of God, etc. Still, the inspired testimony on future punishment is approached with views and feelings unfriendly to the obvious sense of that testimony. This does not prove the obvious sense necessarily the right one; but it presumptively weakens the probability of any other sense which Mr. Birks may substitute.

Notwithstanding this bias, Mr. Birks finds himself unable to deny that everlasting punishment is a manifest doctrine of the Bible. Nay, after quoting some of the most "solemn and fearful" declarations of it, he adds, "There seem to be no direct statements of Scripture, to mitigate, reverse, or explain away these solemn warnings."

The chief points of Mr. Birks's views are, that the ungodly will abide for ever "consciously under the penal and condemning sentence of the righteous Judge;" but, "the punishment will not be so incomplete as to leave the wicked in the active commission of eternal blasphemy, defiant rebellion, and mutual torment, but will bring them, as the footstool of Christ,

into a state of passive subjection, and utter and complete humiliation, under the mighty hand of God," and then "there may be, without sacrifice of God's perfect justice, or of the truth of His solemn threatenings, such a revelation of His goodness, side by side with the irreversible manifestation of His judicial righteousness, as shall gloriously vindicate for Him, in the eyes of the whole universe, and in His dealing with the worst and guiltiest of His creatures, the blessed truth that His name and His nature is pure and perfect love." "That the future condition of the lost will combine with the utmost personal humiliation, shame, and anguish, the passive contemplation of a ransomed universe, and of all the innumerable varieties of blessedness enjoyed by unfallen spirits, and the ransomed people of God; such a contemplation as would be fitted, in its own nature, to raise the soul into a trance of holy adoration, in the presence of infinite and unsearchable Goodness." "They will be compelled, under the mighty hand of God, to see and own the justice of their own sentence; while their own folly and guilt, in despising the warnings of a God of love, will fill them with a sense of everlasting shame. But this utter extinction, by judgment, and by judgment alone, of their pride and blasphemy, and this compulsory submission under the mighty hand of the Holy Judge, will open the way for such a contemplation of creative power, all-seeing wisdom, and redeeming goodness,—all surpassingly glorious,—as shall constitute, not bliss indeed, or joy, but an awful and stupendous consolation,—awful and stupendous, not

from the height to which it raises, but the depth to which it reaches." "They shall see, and they shall be ashamed. They shall see, and wonder, and adore. In the depth and in the height Christ must reign for ever." "The second death, however solemn, completes a perfect work of God, the only wise, and crowns the victory of His perfect goodness over the worst malignity of evil." The second death, based on the atonement, abolishes "pride and falsehood out of the whole universe." "It is mercy to the wicked to deny them the fatal power of adding sin to sin for ever." Saved and lost are to be in sight of each other and mutually benefitted. The first death, resulting from sin and extending to the commencement of the second death at the resurrection, is far more evil than the second. "The second death proceeds directly from the appointment of the Supreme Judge.....it is the Divine remedy for all that is most fearful and appalling of possible and actual evil in a fallen and rebellious universe."

Mr. Birks puts forward these views as matter not of direct revelation, but of *inference*, drawn chiefly from the perfections of God: an inference providentially hidden from all his predecessors, and given to the world through him, now that the state of theological thought is ripe for it. Many of his quotations from Scripture tend to confusion, since they are mere accommodations to express his opinions, rather than proofs; and that, too, where proof is the very thing in requisition. He has enveloped his doctrine in so much of the idea of an extraordinary providence as very

naturally led some of his critics to charge him with pretending to a new revelation. This, however, he earnestly disclaims. His teaching does not profess to be oracular, but ratiocinative,—obtained not by inspiration, but reasoning. The effect is, not to adapt other views to the natural and obvious import of the language of Scripture on future punishment, but to adapt that import to those views. To reason on sacred topics is legitimate enough; and to reason falsely common enough; but to expect that ratiocination (liable at many points to be illative) in opposition to the apparent testimony of Scripture should be accepted as the special work of the All-Wise One, is neither common nor legitimate. Yet such seems to be the expectation of Mr. Birks's book. To say the least, his case ought to be marked by a providential hand *unmistakable*, and by reasoning in every link *irrefragable*: features, as we venture to think, signally lacking in the present case.

Our remarks on Universalism embody much that is equally conclusive against Mr. Birks's modification; on which we may further observe,—

1. It is *not self-consistent*. It is an attempt to weld the doctrine of eternal punishment with the principles of universal restoration. It yields to the weakest arguments of Universalism, yet denies their full logical consequence; admits their premises, yet denies their ultimate conclusions. It adopts their unscriptural and irrational dogmas on the goodness of the Moral Ruler, yet seeks to ward off some of their lawful results. With the notions of God which Mr. Birks copies from the Uni-

versalists, the only consistent inference is, not that which Mr. Birks draws, of a doom of eternally mingled good and evil, but that of absolute and universal restoration. Such attributes as he and they ascribe to God could not tolerate the existence of evil *at any time, in any part* of His sentient creation. Mr. Birks may retain his incongruous creed to the end of life; but, as its parts are mutually incompatible, others who follow him in his premises will leave him behind, and pass on to naked Universalism; which, though not more true than Mr. Birks's position, is more consistent with the theological basis common to both. The stopping place he has chosen between Orthodoxy and Universalism is logically untenable.

Mr. Birks regards the state of the lost as one in which "their pride and blasphemy" will be extinguished, their "active malice" ended, "all actings of the rebellious will" utterly prostrated and repressed, "pride and falsehood" universally abolished, "the most fearful and appalling of possible and actual evil in a fallen and rebellious universe" remedied by the second death. They will "see and own the justice of their own sentence." "They shall see, and wonder, and adore." They shall "glorify" God.

The natural inference from such language is, that there must be a great moral improvement, and by the removal of so many vices their opposite virtues of humility, truth, loyalty, and reverence would be developed. But that would be restoration to goodness of character, and would involve some gracious work in their hearts to effect it. We are told, however, it is

[illegible]

ingratitude, nor selfishness, nor any evil remained? Mr. Birks seems to imply this moral negation when he says, "It is mercy to the wicked to deny them the fatal power of adding sin to sin for ever.....It is mercy to force them back, though captive and in chains, to the presence of that Infinite Goodness, from which their own rebellious hearts would hide them still deeper and deeper in delusion and darkness for evermore." And yet, loss of the moral attributes is inconsistent with retention of the intellectual and sentient, and with their finding relief in the contemplation of moral subjects. While in some places Mr. Birks might be understood to expect that sin in some degree will for ever remain, in others he seems to intimate its utter abolition; *e. g.*, the judicial declaration that the unjust and filthy shall be so still, (Rev. xxii. 11,) stands in the way of his plan of moral improvement: so he shifts its application to the course of time *antecedent* to the judgment. He says, "It has no reference to the fixity of moral state after the judgment, but to its permitted growth and development till the judgment and no longer, like the words, Eccles. xi. 9; Mark iv. 26, 27; and those of our Lord, "Let both" (wheat and tares) "grow together till the harvest." "The harvest," says Christ, "is the end of the world." Can Mr. Birks have weighed the bearing of his interpretation? According to it the wicked and righteous, through the course of time, are respectively and unchangeably the same in character; the righteous man can never become wicked, nor the wicked righteous, and yet the unjust and filthy may cease to be so at, or

after, the judgment, that is to say, conversion is impossible on this side the judgment, but possible at or after it. Elsewhere, Mr. Birks tells us the adoration of the lost is not "holy." Here he seems to imply that their state is not unholy. Does he mean that they have no moral character? Then he is so far at one with the modern Destructionist: but not with the Apostle, who says they "shall utterly perish in their own corruption." For, as Mr. Birks puts it, they shall utterly perish *after they are delivered from* their corruption. Paul says those who sow to the flesh shall reap "corruption;" and this is not some earthly or intermediate state; for he sets it forth as the antithesis to "life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 8.) When the righteous are saved, "Where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?" Some of Mr. Birks's words would appear to answer, *Nowhere as such*. What Peter meant to suggest was that they should appear in what he calls "the perdition of *ungodly* men."

As to the *sentient* state, Mr. Birks ascribes to the lost "such a contemplation of creative power, all-seeing wisdom, and redeeming goodness.....as shall constitute, not bliss indeed, or joy, but an awful and stupendous consolation." He intimates that hope, light, and comfort will be experienced. This contemplation, though "in its own nature" tending to unutterable blessedness, and "to a trance of holy adoration," "may amount only to some merciful relief" "to souls under sentence of judgment." If we catch his meaning on pages 194 and 195, he believes the

happiness of the condemned creature in some degree "remains."

These indications of partial restoration to happiness hardly agree with expressions of their "sense of deepest shame and loss." "The personal loss and ruin may be complete and irreparable, the anguish intense, the shame and sorrow dreadful, the humiliation infinite and irreversible;" a punishment "essentially positive, the infliction of a penal sentence," "the execution of God's 'vengeful justice,'" "everlasting fire."

Can these states co-exist in the experience of the same creature?—"infinite gain," with "anguish intense?" Complete evil must exclude partial good. If the loss and ruin be complete, there is no room for light, hope, comfort, happiness, and stupendous consolation. Temporal experience has often a mixture of happiness and misery at the same moment; but *complete* loss and ruin cannot be endured along with any degree of happiness. Nor is it possible in the eternal world. This discrepancy is not removed by the adjective "personal;" for happiness or misery means nothing except so far as it is personal.

Mr. Birks's theory is not more perspicuous respecting the *devotion* of the lost. He says they will contemplate, wonder, and adore; but the adoration will be "the result of compulsion," and cannot be called "holy." They will "glorify" God; but by compulsion. The contemplation is passive. Does this mean that the will and affections are not engaged? Then it is such worship as God will not accept, and such as

can have no tendency to console the heart of its subject. If it be mere perception of God's perfections or works, devils have that and tremble. If it spring from a heart true to God, it is piety such as hell is never likely to offer or feel. Mr. Birks tells us they will come into the "presence of Infinite Goodness," but reluctantly, by "force," and "in chains." The contemplation may "tend, in its own nature," "to a trance of holy adoration;" but it is not "holy" in them, nor "of free choice." Then how can it be called adoration at all? Possibly the author of this self-conflicting picture of the lost had some feeling of its incongruity when he called their condition "a mysterious paradox, an eternal contrast."

2. Mr. Birks's views *invert the revealed process of God's judicial procedure*. With him the dissolution of body and soul from each other, and the moral and mental dissolution of the man from God, are the *first death*, incurred by sin, abolished by Christ, and reaching on, in the case of the wicked, through the intermediate state, to the resurrection and judgment, to be then succeeded by the *second death*. The first "means the abandonment of the spirit driven out from God's presence, to the unchecked, unbounded, unabated consequences of its own inward corruption and wickedness." It implies "self-tormenting wickedness, unrestrained by the hand of God." It is "corruption and darkness without end," and "involves the worst and most unmingled misery of the creature," "chaos and moral corruption," "degrading, perverting, desecrating all the faculties and powers of the immortal

spirit." The second death is to the lost the sequel of this, and is a "remedy" and "salvation" from, and an "infinite gain" upon, it; a "boon" secured by the atonement of Christ; "a work of redemption, a triumph of Divine love." The first and infinitely worse death ends, and the remedial second death begins, at the solemn period of the resurrection and judgment. So it appears the greater calamity comes *before* the day of reckoning, and the "boon" and lesser calamity *after*. Thus the intermediate state, extending to the close of time, becomes more penal than the final state. The worst of the penalty precedes the dread decision of judgment.

Is this really the order of the Bible, or of common sense? Reason would expect the intermediate state to be one of custody and waiting for the great assize, at which the examination, the decision, and the sentence would take place, to be *subsequently* inflicted and endured. Agreeably to this we read that the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels; "and *then* He shall reward every man according to his works." He will then render eternal life to the good, and to the evil indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. (Rom. ii.) "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; *that every one may receive* the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." That, says the Apostle, is "the terror of the Lord" for which they "persuade men" to be ready.

Mr. Birks takes the second death, or final state of the lost, to be a bounded lake which swallows up the

first death, or boundless bottomless abyss : that is, the limited swallows up the unlimited.

Mr. Birks would have us believe the second death is a merciful deliverance from and extinction of the first death, because death is said to be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. xx.) To us it seems rather to be in some respects a completion and perpetuation of the first death. The death cast into the lake is the same with that which delivered up its dead, or emptied itself of them. But are we to suppose *moral* death emptied itself, or wholly ceased ? Then we have Universalism full-blown.

The essential idea of death with Mr. Birks is dissolution. But, in the second death, is the moral dissolution from God not continued ? He tells us, "Christ came to abolish, and will abolish," not only that part of death which consists in dissolution of body and soul, but also that still more calamitous part which consists "in separation from God," and in "corruption and darkness." But if death in the lost is to be thus destroyed by Christ, the result must be either annihilation, or life, moral and Divine, as well as material. Mr. Birks repudiates annihilation, and therefore, as it is the final and ceaseless state, by logical implication, he resolves the second death into eternal life ; and so falls into collision with Him who said the lost "shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

3. Mr. Birks's representation of the final state of the unsaved as one of moral and sentient amelioration is *inconsistent with the representations of Scripture*, which

tells of men "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." How different this from glorifying God in adoring contemplation! The parable of the talents informs us that the judgment, instead of improving the wicked man, will take all from him. "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," "the blackness of darkness for ever," "wailing and gnashing of teeth," "their worm dieth not," "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," "utterly perish in their own corruption," "the perdition of ungodly men," "judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary," "drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation," "tormented with fire and brimstone," "they have no rest day nor night," "and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," the devil, the beast, and the false prophet, "tormented day and night for ever and ever," are pictures which appear to foretell a doom of positive unmingled misery, and they strikingly contrast with expatiations on a stupendous consolation derived from the adoring contemplation of God, a "salvation," a "remedy," and a "boon," secured by the atonement of Christ. It seems much more reasonable to regard that doom as the deepest calamity possible to men, the perdition to save men from (not to) which the Son of God laid down His life.

4. Mr. Birks's theory ascribes the amelioration to an inadequate cause. The display of the perfections of God, especially His goodness as exercised towards all men

in their temporal probation and for ever towards the ransomed in heaven, is the cause ; and the effect is a measure of happiness in the minds of the lost. What-ever might be the effect on other minds, would such an effect be ever likely in minds estranged by enmity and under the dominion of evil principle ? Are they likely either to appreciate or reciprocate that goodness ? Given, a creature who has despised and resisted the offers of mercy and the claims of authority through every stage of gracious opportunity, from whom the striving Spirit is withdrawn, whose sins have brought him under the sentence of endless suffering : given, also, a compulsory manifestation of God's merciful provisions for his race, by which many are in glory, yet he, despite those provisions, cursed irreversibly. What state of mind is the sight, with its reflections, likely to produce in him ? Mr. Birks says, comfort, consolation, etc. We should as decidedly answer, self-reproach, bitter remorse, despair, possibly a feeling of resentment or defiance. A reckless son left by his wealthy father destitute on account of his persistent ingratitude, disobedience, and dissipation, might, from the midst of his vice and hard penury, contemplate the mansions and other luxuries inherited by his brothers, and might think of the paternal love which would have bequeathed the same to him but for his own bad conduct. Yet, retaining his evil disposition, and bearing in mind that the loss was irretrievable, the effect of the mental process would be more likely to produce pain than comfort. There is nothing in the display of gracious opportunities for ever lost by

himself, and for ever enjoyed by others, to awaken agreeable emotions in a spirit in whom sin remains dominant.

Mr. Birks expects the soul in perdition to forget his misery in the contemplation of the blessedness of the saved, somewhat as the soldier or sailor may almost forget his wounds "in his deep joy for his commander's or his country's victory." The analogy fails. The soldier is on the winning side; the lost soul on the opposite. The soldier has helped to win the victory; the lost soul has fought against it. The soldier is animated by love to his country or commander; the lost soul is not likely to possess that principle in relation to the saints or their King.

5. We hold that Mr. Birks proceeds on an *erroneous notion of God's goodness*. Here we suspect is one of the main roots of his mistaken theory. He seems to take love to be the essence or inmost being of God, rather than a glory or attribute; and consequently reasons on the assumption that every intelligent creature must necessarily be at all times the object of His love, and the recipient of His benefaction. But if love be the essence, every act of God must be the act of love, even where it is in the strictest sense penal, and also where the recipient is an unintelligent and inanimate creature. That every act may have some relation to, or association with, love to some part of creation is true enough; but that every act of God is a benefaction to every recipient of it, is impossible in the case of His action on insensate matter, and improbable in cases of penal infliction on rebellious spirits. How can His

act of "hating," be in itself an act of love? The Apostle James speaks of a case of "judgment without mercy." Even Mr. Birks speaks of the extinction of pride and blasphemy "by judgment, and by judgment alone." Supposing God's hating and punishing, and every act in His natural and moral government, to be either one step leading to a benefit, or in some way related to a benefit to be enjoyed by some other creature, the act itself may not be a benefaction to the creature that is its immediate object. God's goodness is an attribute, not His essence, and therefore it is not necessarily operative in every act, to every creature, for that creature's benefit. Consequently the infliction of endless punishment may be an act of sovereign power and justice, without being to the recipient an act of love. God's power is essential to the sentient creature's being,—God's beneficence to his well-being. But beneficence may be absent where well-being is not designed.

But supposing the lost to be the objects of God's pity, does it follow that such pity must confer upon them some benefit? Incurrible perverseness in the creature may preclude the benefit which might otherwise arise from pity. It is no derogation to say God's pity cannot help its objects irrespectively of His truth and justice, and of their character, any more than to say that His power cannot subject them to pain irrespectively of the same. Divine pity would have conferred life on the perverse Jews: yet having regard to their moral state, it could only cry, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." "How often would I have gathered you.....and ye would not."

Hence, allowing that God may look even upon the lost with pity, it does not follow that such pity must result in their benefit. Much of Mr. Birks's reasoning, therefore, on God's necessary love to all His creatures, and their consequent amelioration in hell, falls to the ground.

Throughout his book Mr. Birks seems to have a somewhat *mathematical* notion of Divine love. He never tires of talking of its reaching or extending to the depth as well as the height, as if it were measurable by space. This is harmless as an illustration ; but questionable, when it is argued thence, that every part of creation must necessarily be a beneficial receiver. Not to speak of inanimate matter, there may be moral beings incapacitated, not by nature like matter, but by moral character and relations, to share the advantage of God's perfect love ; beings who have wilfully flung away a life of gracious overtures from Him. Mr. Birks believes love's "depth, like the breadth, and length, and height, will be eternally revealed. But this can only be by the manifestation of love towards the guilty and condemned." "The perpetual yearnings of a deep and true compassion towards those.....under irreversible punishment," Mr. Birks thinks essential to the display of this Divine love. We believe in the same eternal revelation ; but strongly demur to Mr. Birks's *dictum* respecting the manner of it, as a narrow and unwarrantable limitation of the method of Divine procedure. The revelation may be eternal without being universal. Holy men and angels may see it eternally, and others miss it. Or if the lost

see it, they may derive no personal advantage from it.

Mr. Birks apparently assumes that any creature of any character not the object of God's beneficence implies a *limit* to His benevolence. If so, any diminution of His beneficence, such as the change from complacency to pity, which takes place when a holy being falls into sin, must be a limitation. Nay, the limit of the moral creation must be a limit to His benevolence. The reasoning is about equally weak in each case; for it estimates God's love by the number of finite creatures who are its objects, instead of the infinitude of His own nature. If not to love some of His subjects who have spurned His love be an imperfection, then not to love any one creature *more than He actually does* love him is an imperfection. Creation is limited, but not the Creator. Men and angels are limited in capacity and number; and if each were full of Divine beneficence, they and their fulness of blessing would still be finite; and if one, or several of them, were deprived of that blessing, the remainder would be none the more truly finite. But the Divine *source* of blessing would be infinite, whether they received less or more. The perfection of God's love is not to be estimated merely by the number of its objects, but by its intrinsic and essential excellence. God's benefaction contrary to truth and justice would be an imperfection; not so His withholding it out of regard to truth and justice. The height of His love is not literally the height of heaven, nor its depth literally the depth of hell. It is high as God's brightest glory,

deep as the condescension which redeemed mankind, broad as all the provisions and gifts of redemption ; or, leaving out figures relating to space, its perfection is more than finite mind can think, and appears in the gift of happiness to all as far as consists with all His other perfections. So that argument in favour of mercy to the lost, grounded on the supposed necessary connection between God's benevolence and every moral creature, though seemingly generous to the doomed, and laudatory to God, is only a rope of sand. Partial is as little needed as complete restoration of the condemned to explain the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

Mr. Birks argues that because God's love would bless His enemies at one time or stage of their existence, such must be the case universally and eternally. But the link is wanting between the premises and the conclusion. There was a period, no doubt, when God's complacency rested upon every moral creature : but to infer thence that it must rest on every moral creature for ever would belie the history of God's dealings with fallen angels and men. God is good to all at some period or other. But it does not follow that He is so to all, at all times, and in every act.

6. Mr. Birks proceeds on an *erroneous notion of the victory*, which the perfections and word of God warrant us to expect. He asserts that the second death " crowns the victory of His perfect goodness over the worst malignity of evil." The eternal absence of all

merciful alleviation, he says, would be "the eternal defeat, with no real victory of goodness." And so he supposes a merciful display of Divine goodness as a defence of the ways of God.

Such a victory of goodness is nowhere revealed in the Scriptures. This silence is significant. If the reason of it were, as Mr. Birks thinks, that the idea might be opportunely discovered by inference in the nineteenth century, we are at a loss to see the wisdom of the arrangement. If it be a solution of theological difficulty now, it would have been so before; for the charge against the doctrine of eternal punishment, in respect to goodness, which this discovery is intended to meet, was made many a time, and long before Mr. Birks hit upon his peculiar answer. The fact, that all the anxious research and study bestowed on the question by thousands of thinkers during eighteen centuries failed to find it out, is a presumptive consideration against the accuracy of the inferences of a solitary man, even though that man be the able and esteemed author whose work we are now considering. Nor can we appreciate the attempt to find the opportuneness of the discovery in the requirements of an improved general "sense of God's universal goodness." Indeed, the danger of this plea is that it seems to countenance those morbid notions of Divine love which are seeking to palm themselves so extensively upon the present age as sound, and lead to conclusions antagonistic to plain declarations of God's Word. Comparing the theological characteristics of this with preceding generations, we fail to see any such difference as

might account for the providential disclosure, by mere inference, of Mr. Birks's doctrine in this day, after its concealment for eighteen centuries, and the acknowledged silence of Holy Writ. Allow Mr. Birks to fortify his position by the intervention of a special providence, and how many other teachers of religious novelties may not do the same with equal plausibility?

The victory we *do* read of in the Bible, which is to be gained over rebellious men and angels, is referred to as one of *power, rightful authority, sovereignty, retribution, justice; not of love*. We read of Christ's spoiling "principalities and powers," of His being "King of kings and Lord of lords," of His having "all power," of His pre-eminence "over all things," of "angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto Him," of His having "the keys of death and of hell" or the invisible world, of His exaltation "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come;"—all which expressions point to His supreme *Lordship*. His being "Lord of all," "both the dead and living," does not necessitate His loving and blessing all. Between Him and His final foes it is a question of authority and power, not of love and reclamation. Those who, under His judgment, unwillingly bow the knee and confess Him Lord, do it in forced acknowledgment of His rightful Lordship, not in adoration of His goodness. To be His "footstool," or have the neck under His feet, clearly denotes on His part, not an attitude of helpful mercy, but of strength, control, contempt,

retributive justice; and on the other part, helpless subjection and humiliation. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Then there is no destruction of moral evil subsequently. But the destruction of death, as an enemy, implies towards the object (death) not mercy or partial deliverance, but overwhelming, antagonistic, just, and powerful authority. Strictly speaking, the universal victory will be, not of particular attributes, but of the One Supreme Godhead, displaying, as far as we are informed by His Word, His several attributes *variously*, according to the nature and character of the several branches of His dominion; here love blending with, and throwing its halo around, the display of power and righteousness; there dread almighty justice, because love on God's terms was refused. We read of grace reigning unto eternal life, that is, to the righteous, never of any such reign in hell. Christ's victory over lost spirits is invariably represented as a judgment, not a benison. The idea of the second death as a mercy and a boon to the condemned is *brought to* the inspired account, and appears in no way to harmonize with it.

Mr. Birks assumes, if we understand him, that for rebellion or anything inimical to God's love to remain in any part of the universe, would be a defeat of God, and a victory of evil, in a rival dominion. Now it cannot be denied that evil has long and extensively existed, and will exist to the day of judgment. On Mr. Birks's method of arguing, all this is God's defeat and Satan's victory. If it be correct to argue that evil cannot always continue because contrary to

the natural tendency of benevolence, the very same sort of inference would prove that it ought never to have existed at all. What is wrong in itself, is so for a moment as truly as for eternity. Mr. Birks seems here to have lost sight of the axiom he applies to another point, viz., "What is possible at all, for a time, is possible to be continued." The sin which is antagonistic to every moral perfection of God, and is both possible and actual from the moment of the first angel's fall through the whole course of time without any real defeat of, or derogation from, the perfections of God, must be equally possible in perpetuity. Moreover, on Mr. Birks's theory of victory, the sin which he seems to suppose will continue for ever, though in something like a passive state, whether it be selfishness, or envy, or resentment, or any other phase of sin, would be a similar defeat of Divine goodness. For God to have a perfect victory after Mr. Birks's standard, no sin and, in truth, no sorrow can remain. Being contrary to the simple tendency of benevolence, it must annihilate them. But that would amount to nothing less than universal restoration: another illustration of the logical untenableness of Mr. Birks's peculiar position.

As far as we can make out, Mr. Birks expects all "active rebellion and blasphemy" to be extinguished, and the eternally condemned reduced to passive subjection and humiliation, "under the mighty hand of God." So far, then, we gather that every rebel is to be delivered from sin, *nolens volens*; a means of effecting moral improvement sufficiently inappropriate. But

what of the sinful principle remaining? Were all actual sin disposed of by forcible suppression, what of the sinful proneness of the heart? Is not that a moral evil whose continuance, as Mr. Birks reckons, must mar God's victory? However suppressed by might, as long as the seeds of rebellion and blasphemy remain, in addition to guilt and misery, being all contrary to simple benevolence, (and some of them to justice too,) they must be, on Mr. Birks's assumption, a defeat of Divine goodness. Hence he must in consistency either adopt Universalism out and out, or admit that his own theory, equally with that he has abandoned, implies a defeat of mercy.

Mr. Birks tells us the lost will be "compelled" to glorify God in hell, and that must be to them "a real and infinite gain." The gain, we should think, must depend on *how* they glorify Him. Their manifest defeat, their original endowments, the history of their probationary relations to God, and their righteous judgment, may glorify God, without being any gain to them.

We cannot endorse Mr. Birks's notion of defeat and victory. At this moment, tens of thousands of Frenchmen are under the power of the victorious King of Prussia. Assuming their spirit to remain anti-Prussian, and their imprisonment to be life-long, is that a victory of those prisoners, and a defeat of the King? No. Then, when God has demonstrated the subjection of the universe to His majesty, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders," reducing the devil and his followers to the condition of eternal

prisoners, powerless to make any aggression on loyal and innocent regions, or to act out their infernal dispositions, how can that be called God's defeat and Satan's triumph? It can only be by a nomenclature as arbitrary and inverted as it is misleading. In the ordinary use of the language, God's defeat and Satan's victory would mean God subjected to the will and power of Satan. The state of things assailed by Mr. Birks is the exact contrary; evil, neither reigning nor annihilated, yet for ever vanquished.

The hackneyed objection, that, according to the doctrine of unmixed eternal suffering, Christ died in vain for the lost, has been refuted in the body of the essay. And if it had force against our doctrine, it would have force against Mr. Birks's, inasmuch as the objection assumes that Christ's *absolute determination* was to save all to eternal life; while on this new hypothesis there are millions who will never attain it. To say they will get some "relief" does not remove the difficulty; for they would still come short of eternal life. The fallacy common to Mr. Birks and the Universalist is this *assumption*. Grant that, and the objection lies against Mr. Birks's view as well as ours. The mediatorial scheme will not be in vain. God's will and power to save men will be demonstrated, His perfect love displayed, His honour and justice vindicated, despite the self-chosen ruin of the wicked. For the salvation of the lost it may appear in vain as far as they have elected to have it so. For God, and saints, and angels, and the universe, it will *not* be in vain. Even for the lost, Christ's death failed not to

procure the grand opportunity of their lifetime, though they refused it. This is no more a defect in God's arrangement than was His primeval law by which man might have "lived," and yet by violating which he died: nor any more than the offer of soil, seed, and all needful resources for obtaining a harvest of food is vain, where man wilfully neglects to use them, and consequently starves. Such frustrations reflect great dishonour upon man, none upon the government of God.

7. We cannot but question the *moral tendency* of Mr. Birks's new doctrine. In fact, he acknowledges the danger, and charges those who assert the "natural and reasonable tendency" of his doctrine to be to "deaden the conscience and paralyse the will," with doing "their worst to increase this danger." Notwithstanding this caveat, we think such is its natural tendency. Nor is the case parallel, as Mr. Birks suggests, to that of the Scriptures, wrested by unlearned and unstable men to their own destruction. They went contrary to the "natural and reasonable tendency" of the Scriptures. Whereas for a sinner to be less influenced by the prospect of a mitigated, relieved, and beneficent penalty, than one unrelieved, is reasonable and natural. Not to speak of those who will take advantage of the milder view to benumb their consciences, and countenance their continuance in sin, those lovers of sin who look the subject full in the face may reasonably plead that the deterrent penalty is unspeakably less on Mr. Birks's representation than on the other. While so many brave the terror of the

Lord as it is, we are convinced the number would be increased by the general acceptance of this new view. The Gospel of mercy is liable to *abuse* by the procrastinator; but to diminish concern respecting the penalty of sin, as Mr. Birks puts it, would seem to be the natural *use* of his discovery. If the motive presented by this new doctrine contain the just measure of appeal to the fears, then the motive of the older view which has prevailed by Divine arrangement (as Mr. Birks allows) during eighteen centuries, contained an *untrue* and *undue* power of appeal to the fears. Either the motive left by the New Testament for so many centuries, or that now presented in Mr. Birks's teaching, is false to the realities of the world to come. We hesitate not to side with the former.

Mr. Birks adduces twenty "reasons" for his view, which might have been perhaps as easily dilated or contracted into any other round number. Ten of them are attempts to show that the future state will be like the present; nine are included in the question of the extent and effects of Divine goodness; and one is an assertion of the inseparable union of grace and righteousness. Having referred in some form or other to most of the points included, we need only glance at the "reasons" here.

1. All human punishments on earth are ameliorative. So in the future. *Ans.* Final retribution is their contrast rather than their imitation.

2. God's punishments in this world are mixed with mercy. So in the future. *Ans.* The contrast is again overlooked between this probationary and that penal

state. The same kind of inference, if sound, would prove that the righteous must have a mixture of happiness and misery in the future, because they have it in the present.

8. The bounty of the Creator is unchangeable. Hence the lost must share it. *Ans.* The premise is assumed. Bounty may not be the sole, invariable, ultimate object and rule of God's action. But even on Mr. Birks's hypothesis God's bounty is changeable to the lost in some *degree*: for they receive much less than in their original state.

4. Christ's description of God's love to the unworthy as well as the worthy. *Ans.* (1.) Christ never speaks of any such love to the lost. (2.) Carrying out this sort of reasoning, God ought to treat the saved and lost alike.

5. The offender was to be honoured as a natural brother by the judge or executioner who inflicted stripes. Forty not to be exceeded lest the culprit should seem vile. *Ans.* (1.) Irrelevant. (2.) Notwithstanding this Jewish law, the future state of the lost is one of "everlasting contempt," and, as Mr. Birks says, "utter shame."

6. The inseparable union of grace and righteousness in God's "moral actings." Else there would be a schism between these attributes. *Ans.* This confounds God's "actings" with His attributes. According to this reasoning, every act of God must employ every attribute, known or unknown.

7. Punishment must be within sight of the Lamb, and saints, who, loving their neighbour, could not be

happy in sight of the perfect misery of the lost. *Ans.* (1.) The question of sympathy is discussed in a separate chapter. (2.) Judged thus, could they be happy to look for ever on a hell such as Mr. Birks describes? With their earthly sympathies and conditions, how could the judgment of God on the great whore evoke the alleluiah of saints and angels? (Rev. xix.)

8. Punishment must be a work of mercy to the lost : for God's rendering according to works is called "mercy." (Psalm lxii. 12.) *Ans.* (1.) Mr. Birks surely cannot mean that the infliction of endless punishment is *per se* a mercy to the offender. Whatever benevolent accompaniments may be alleged, *they* are not the punishment. Yet the *punishment* is rendered according to his works. (2.) The meaning of the passage is partly missed by dis-connection with the previous verse, which shows that the "for" refers to *power* as well as *mercy*: that is, His rendering to all according to their works displays both power and mercy; power, in overruling the power of the creature; mercy, in rewarding all who diligently seek Him. But it does not follow that both are exercised in each case. (3.) Supposing the reference to be, as some think, to the Lord's proclamation of Himself to Moses, (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7,) we find unswerving justice as well as mercy. See also Dr. A. Clarke's comment, which accords with our second answer. (4.) Mr. Birks's interpretation of the passage disagrees with the analogy of faith, which traces the enforcement of final irreversible punishment to, not mercy, but "righteous judgment."

9. God has not forgotten to be gracious, (Psalm lxxvii.,) nor shut up His tender mercies ; some form of which must be displayed in hell. *Ans.* (1.) *Non sequitur.* (2.) Mr. Birks applies unconditionally to all mankind, dead and living, what referred to a part conditionally ; applies to the state of the lost what belonged to probationers.

10. In this life God's bounty falls "on the evil and the good," "the just and the unjust." *Ans.* (1.) If the same comparative treatment is to apply after probation, then the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be much alike. (2.) To argue that God's lovingkindness will descend on the wicked there because it does so here is inconsequential, and discordant with Scriptural teaching. (3.) The suggestion that the wicked in hell will be so humbled and crushed as to be predisposed to appreciate and receive God's lovingkindness is unsupported by reason or Scripture.

11. God troubles His enemies for ever, that they may know that Jehovah is the most high over all the earth, as "unchangeable in goodness." (Psalm lxxxiii. 18.) *Ans.* (1.) "Unchangeable in goodness" is Mr. Birks's phrase, not the Psalmist's. (2.) The passage refers to supreme being and sovereignty rather than goodness. And the trouble and confusion for ever would display His righteous anger rather than His lovingkindness. (3.) But the reference seems to be to *nations* ; and the design, to lead the hostile peoples to "seek" God, and know Him "the Most High over all the earth."

12. "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." (Psalm cxlv. 9.) On the supposition of "perfect merciless misery, the words of the Psalm would cease to be true," and "a revealed perfection of God would then be annihilated in the judgment-day." *Ans.* (1.) As well say the perfection is annihilated on earth when a darkened sinner does not *see* it. Its visibility to any particular part of creation is not essential to its existence. (2.) Mixed mercy and judgment are inconsistent with the threatening of "judgment without mercy." (3.) The reference of this part of the Psalm (verses 10-17) is not to a future hell, but the present world under the government of God. Otherwise verses 14, 15, 16, would imply the restoration of the lost. (4.) If the explanation of the ninth verse must be rigidly literal, it must be noted that the tense is not fixed, except by italics, which are *present*, not future. He "*is* good to all, and His tender mercies *are* over all His works." (5.) On Mr. Birks's theory of mercy conquering all evil, some of God's perfections are maimed, if not annihilated, by the sin and misery that do and will exist.

13. Isaiah lvii. 16 ascribes the preservation of the being of the wicked for ever to God's love. *Ans.* (1.) The context (verses 18, 19) teaches that the souls are to be healed and led and comforted. Therefore these cannot be the lost in hell. (2.) The more probable meaning is, that the Lord's contention results in the yielding of souls to be saved by Him, or in their utter overthrow, in which, though unsaved, they are too completely vanquished to contend.

14. The rebellious Jews were to be comforted, through a remnant, concerning the four sore judgments, and to own the wisdom of God. (Ezek. xiv. 22.) *Ans.* According to the analogy here suggested, the lost are to be comforted through a saved remnant whose doings they will see. Then it appears hell will command a view of heaven, or saints will descend to display their works in hell, and thus comfort without restoring the lost. The sight of pure happy spirits in contrast to their own endless impurity and misery must be a strange and unnatural sort of comfort.

15. The tears of Jesus over Jerusalem showed compassion to rebels. *Ans.* (1.) Yes, on earth and during probation. (2.) It does not appear, however, that they derived any comfort from that display of His pity; or that it was at all victorious in the sense in which Mr. Birks expects it to be in the world to come.

16. Christ's prayer on the cross was for His murderers, *i. e.*, for all; and His prayer must be heard. *Ans.* There is neither proof nor sign that He prayed for sinners who had passed their probation. For, if He prayed and must be heard for all universally, then the lost must be *forgiven*, and so saved. But Mr. Birks says their guilt remains.

17. It is predicted that God shall be "all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 28.) Hence God, not the devil, shall reign over the lost. *Ans.* So God will reign in righteous sovereignty as certainly as, and more completely than, Victoria reigns over the thousands in her

prisons. To reign over them precisely as He does over saints would imply not only His love to them, but theirs to Him, that is, their restoration to holiness.

18. The last enemy, death, is to be destroyed ; from which it is inferred that all moral enmity shall be destroyed. *Ans.* (1.) This is arguing from the particular to the general ; *i. e.*, all kinds shall be destroyed because one shall. (2.) It seems to involve the *reconciliation* of the lost to God. If so, they will be at least partially saved. All enmity gone is a moral reformation, and hardly corresponds with their ceaseless continuance in unholiness and intense anguish and shame. (3.) The conquest of death is by the bodily resurrection, not by a change of moral character.

19. Christ is a *ransom for all*, not only for Jews, but for Gentiles. *Ans.* (1.) So He is ; but the offer of its benefit is made to men on earth, not in hell. (2.) If offered to spirits in hell as it was to Jews and Gentiles, it amounts to the proposal of universal restoration ; which Mr. Birks denies.

20. The love of Christ in its " dimension " surpasseth all created knowledge ; (Eph. iii. 20 ;) and therefore must reach down to the lowest depth of shame and misery. *Ans.* (1.) Reasoning thus, it must reach to the depth of turning all the condemned into blissful saints, and that at once. (2.) Paul's phrase is quite true and intelligible without Mr. Birks's local or cubic measurement of a moral excellence. Its purity, sublimity, and continuity exceed the grasp of a created mind : or, as others understand the expres-

sion, the knowledge of this love surpasseth all other kinds of knowledge.

Following Mr. Birks's example of applying passages to the retributive future world which evidently belong only to this probationary one, all the merciful overtures and provisions of the Gospel would have to be repeated in perdition. Indeed, the state of the lost would be a continuation of the Christian dispensation. Then, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me," must be preached in hell as well as on earth.

After candidly weighing the import of Mr. Birks's supposed discovery, without raising the least question of its author's sincerity, it is our deliberate conclusion that it has no valid title to a place among Christian truths.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICHOLS,

46, HOXTON SQUARE.



